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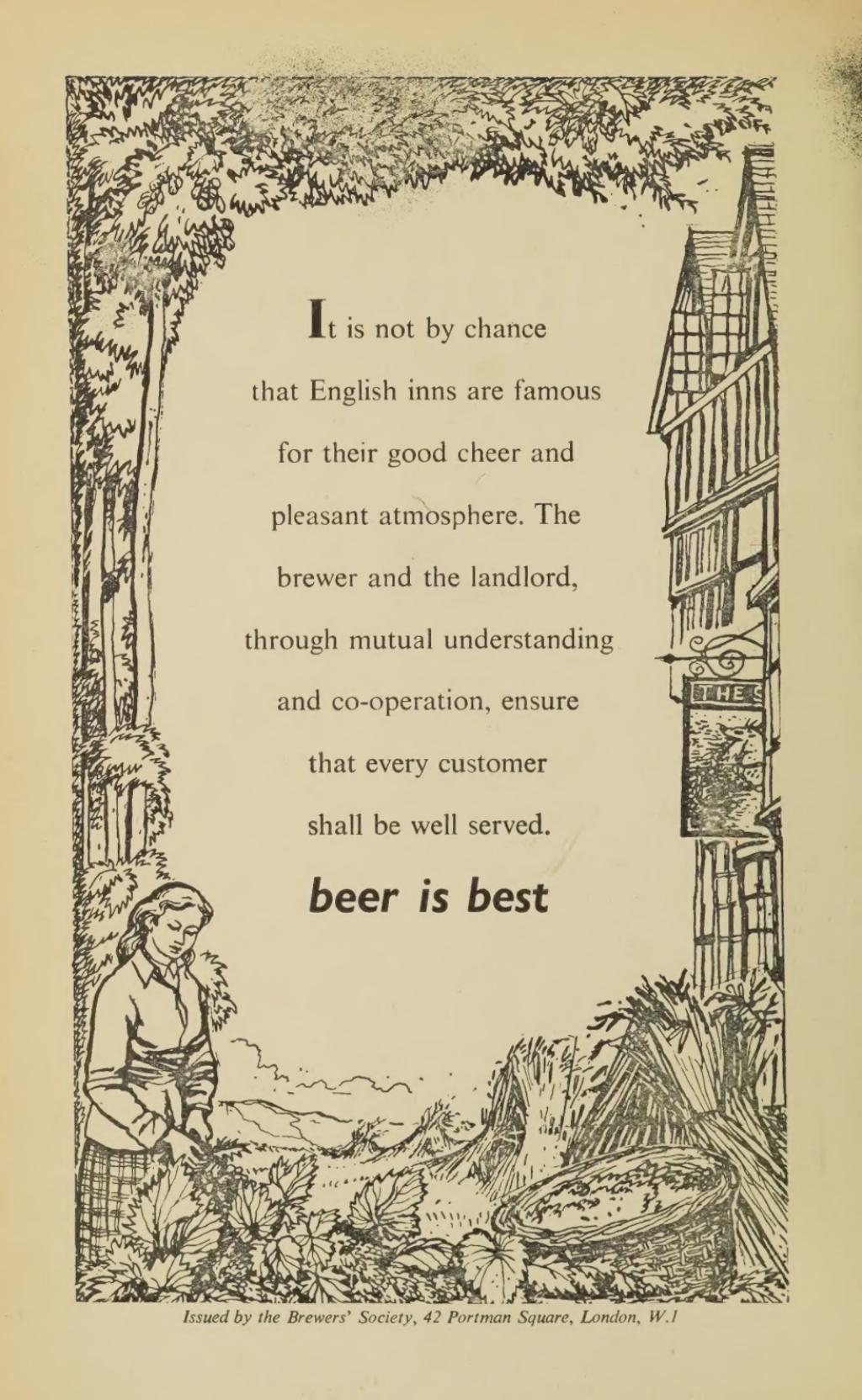
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# THE FORTNIGHTLY

MARCH, 1950

## ARGENTINA—"WHERE THE MEAT COMES FROM"

BY GEORGE PENDLE

ONE Sunday evening last spring, an Argentine professor who was visiting London was asked to mount one of the open-air tribunes at Marble Arch. Sportingly, he did so; and from that elevation he declaimed verses from Shakespeare in his own Spanish translation. A group of Londoners applauded this unusual performance, and one of them inquired of him where he came from. When he replied : "Argentina", a voice called out sarcastically : "That's where the meat comes from—didn't it ?" The Argentine professor answered : "Yes. But *I* have brought you poetry."

The news that the Argentines are eating greater quantities of their home-grown meat than ever before, incites our popular press to indignant and even insulting comment, because the British people have long considered it the primary duty of the Argentines to produce beef for Britain. This attitude is a survival from the times of George Canning, who, when his Government had signed the first commercial treaties with the newly-emancipated republics of Latin America, exclaimed triumphantly : "The deed is done, the nail is driven. Spanish America is free ; and if we do not mismanage our affairs sadly, she is English."

The extent to which we may have mismanaged our affairs is debatable ; but Spanish-speaking America certainly is not ours, and President Perón emphasized this point when he came to power in 1946. Argentina (he explained) had been politically independent for over one hundred years, and now she was to be liberated economically. By means of the President's programme of industrialization, Argentina was to be freed from dependence on foreign customers and foreign factories. That was the President's "target".

The Argentine Five Year Plan, however, did not represent a completely new departure ; it merely confirmed and intensified a trend which had been long apparent, and which, in varying degrees, was common to all the other Latin American republics. The British Agricultural Mission which visited South America in 1947 reported : "The food position in South America is not standing still : it is growing worse. This great industrial continent is importing food ; there is not one country where marketed supply is keeping pace with increasing consumption ; and we would hazard the view that there

is more than one country—Argentina, Venezuela and possibly Peru—where not only this relative supply but actual production is declining."\* The mission summed up the position in Argentina thus :

It is a saying in Argentina that "no Government, however bad, can ruin any country." Those who dislike the present régime are beginning to wonder if this is true. The inherent wealth of the country, they say, lies in her rich and fertile land : no Government can destroy this wealth, but it is all too easy so to interfere with the social and economic structure of the nation that it ceases to render that contribution to national finances on which alone further industrial and sound development can be supported.

On the other hand, the present Government would presumably argue that the greatest service they can render to their country is to foster extensive and immediate industrial development even at the expense of temporary dislocation. They are pledged to provide higher wages and better standards of living for their workers ; they have seen their country cut off from external supplies of consumer goods during the years of war : they know that other countries with no industrial pay-roll and dependent on the primary producer, have passed through severe financial crises when world food prices have been low : they consider that a larger proportion of the earnings from the land should be diverted from the owners to the workers. Moreover, they think it right to divert a large share of these earnings from the producer to the national exchequer. This is no more, they would say, than other nations are doing by direct taxation.†

During 1947 and 1948 the Argentine Government seriously under-estimated the effect of their industrial policy on the country's agricultural production and exportable surpluses ; and they treated too lightly the complaints of the cattle-breeders and the farmers, that cattle-raising and agriculture had been rendered unremunerative by the Government's purchasing and marketing methods.‡ Thus the Argentine Government entered into commitments abroad which they could not possibly fulfil. In 1948 the 420,000 tons of meat promised to Great Britain signified a prodigious slaughtering of cattle and sheep, and an enormous undertaking for transport (with the railways still awaiting post-war re-equipment) and for the *frigoríficos* (which were subject to labour troubles) ; but Sr. Miranda was not content to leave it at that ; he proceeded to aggravate the position by offering 169,000 tons of meat to Belgium, Holland and several other countries. It was an optimistic gesture, but an unrealizable proposition in practice, with the increased population and higher wages in Argentina automatically augmenting the local demand for meat. When Great Britain protested that the Andes agreement of February 1948 was not being fulfilled, there was at first a suggestion that our complaints were unwarranted ; but the true state of affairs gradually became apparent to the Argentines themselves. It was almost unbelievable,

\*" Report of the South American Agricultural Mission, 1947 ", Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, p. 10.

†Ibid p.33.

‡The psychological reasons for the relative decline of cattle-raising and farming were discussed in an article, "The Gaucho", in the October 1949 number of THE FORTNIGHTLY.

but it was true : they simply hadn't enough meat to go around.

It is now apparent, however, that the latest Anglo-Argentine agreement, signed in June 1949, was founded on just as grave a miscalculation of Argentina's current resources as the previous one had been ; and it is evident that this particular agreement might just as well never have been signed. A British writer in Buenos Aires interprets the present situation in the following manner :

Argentina's inability to provide import permits for all that Great Britain would like to send to this market derives mainly from the fact that Argentina has been living beyond her means in sterling . . Argentina's possible earnings of sterling in 1950 are the only clue to the probable pattern of Anglo-Argentine trade in the immediate future, and that raises the question of Argentina's exportable stocks. . . . According to the Minister of Agriculture, there was in 1947 a total stock of 41 million head of cattle, of which 40 per cent or 16.4 millions, were cows. These could produce 11,480,000 calves, male and female, in a year, from which 1,230,000 (3 per cent of total stock) should be deducted for mortality and 800,000 for stock replacements. This leaves a total available for slaughter of 9,450,000 head, which, on a basis of 215 kilograms of meat, an average, to each carcase, represents 2,030,000 tons. As the Minister observed, the probable domestic consumption for 1949 would be some 1,600,000 tons, leaving an exportable surplus of 430,000 tons, against a minimum commitment of 300,000 tons with Great Britain.

There remains, then, at the most a balance of 130,000 tons for other countries and for increased purchases by the United Kingdom ; and the United Kingdom undertook to receive an annual maximum of 600,000 tons of meat and offal and 40,000 tons of canned meat. It is obvious therefore that Argentina cannot supply the maximum volume contracted for, and that to sell in other markets would prevent any appreciable increase over the present volume of shipments to the United Kingdom. It may be recalled that during the period 1940-1944 Argentina exported an average of over 500,000 tons of beef a year.\*

The production of grain has likewise been unsatisfactory. The Government's policy in recent years has been directed to the maintaining of high export prices rather than to the development of the country's agriculture. Farmers have been discouraged, and have sown smaller areas ; and this year the harvest will be reduced further by the very severe drought which has especially affected the maize and sunflower crops. During the war, Argentina was using surplus maize as fuel in factories and on the railways ; this year she will have no surplus ; in fact there will probably be insufficient maize even to satisfy normal domestic requirements. The British purchase of 300,000 tons of maize last December (which caused a minor sensation in the press, and much ill-informed comment) was an astute deal, and Argentina now has no reserves of this grain.

In Latin America (and not only in Latin America) it has long been fashionable to believe that working on the land is an inferior occupation, and that a country's merit is to be judged by the number and size of its factories and skyscrapers. A certain amount of "face" is therefore lost when a traditionally agricultural and pastoral country

\**The Review of the River Plate*, January 10, 1950, pp. 15-16.

which has lavishly publicized its industrial ambitions, is compelled to moderate its industrial programme and launch a campaign for the growing of more grain and the raising of more cattle. It is not surprising that the Argentine Government, when they began to recognize their predicament, hesitated to perform this *volte face*; but it must be acknowledged that they have now (in words, at least) performed the inevitable contortion. In September 1949 President Perón announced that in future the fostering of agriculture would be his Government's chief concern. Bank credits to farmers would be extended; new agricultural schools would be created; and the mechanization of agriculture would be accelerated. After the devaluation of sterling, President Perón manipulated his rates of exchange with the object of stimulating the exports of Argentine produce. The trouble now, as we have seen, is that his exportable surpluses—like his reserves of dollars and sterling—have vanished. Great Britain could buy more meat and maize from Argentina; but none is available. Therefore, Argentina cannot purchase from Great Britain the goods that she had promised to buy, nor can she remit the profits of British companies operating in Argentina that she had promised to remit. As the chairman of Liebig's Extract of Meat Company remarked recently: "The dividends declared by our subsidiary companies for the two years ended 31st August 1948 and 1949 are still awaiting remittance. Incorrect appreciation of the implications of the commitments (of the agreement signed last June), as well as temporary lack of the physical means in the shape of sterling to implement them, have been tacitly conceded to be reasoned pleas for deferment."

Unfortunately, the shortage of foreign currency will hamper the development of agriculture, which needs dollars before it can earn more dollars. Argentine agriculture is desperately short of machinery and spare parts, which have to be imported—mainly from the U.S.A. and Canada.\* In December, the Argentine Minister of Finance announced that the Central Bank would grant 27 million dollars a year for the purchase of agricultural machinery. A later communiqué gave a list of the machines to be imported: tractors, harvesters, motor ploughs, and so on. *The Review of the River Plate* commented: "The mere recital of the list brings joy to the farmers, since it involves the purchase of the most vitally necessary goods, to replace worn-out equipment and to introduce *modern machines hardly known here as yet*.

\*The British Agricultural Mission to South America expressed the opinion that British Agricultural implement makers ought to revise their outlook and their methods in dealing with South America, whose characteristics of course differ greatly from the British. And the Mission added: "We are surprised to find such emphasis laid upon the export of British motor cars, which, incidentally, are not suited to most parts of the continent. Once a car is sold, that is the end of the transaction for Britain, except for spare parts. The sale of a farm tractor or implement, however, leads to increased food production and thus earns a dividend in which all the world shares."—"Report of the South American Agricultural Mission" pp. 8-9.

Nevertheless, we fear that his optimism may turn out to be somewhat excessive. In the first place, the present requirements of the country are enormous, and the quantity of exchange assigned is small. Merely to replace antiquated tractors will require imports of 10,000 new units. To import 10,000 tractors would itself absorb 20 million dollars."† The Argentine Rural Confederation recently estimated that there are only 35,000 tractors in use in the country, and that 42,000 new tractors are needed. It is evident, therefore, that Argentina's lack of foreign currency will have the effect of delaying an increase, not only in her imports, but also in her exports.

In September a bill was passed in Buenos Aires suspending the backing of gold and foreign currency for the peso. Argentina's traditional surplus with the sterling area on current account, seems no longer to exist. If we want to increase our trade with Argentina, we must therefore discover some method of supplying her with sterling. We may pay a higher price for meat ; or we may make an advance payment, or a loan of some kind—though to accept a loan from London would be a humiliating experience for President Perón, and he would only accept that solution in circumstances of the gravest emergency. One thing is certain : the abuse directed against Argentina by our popular press will not increase that country's production of meat and maize, nor stimulate Argentine purchases of British goods.

*(The author is an authority on Latin-American affairs who has spent much time in the Argentine.)*

## NIGERIA NOW

BY GILBERT McALLISTER

**N**IGERIA is the biggest single colony in the British Empire. It has a population estimated at 28,000,000—this is only a guess for it is almost impossible to get any precise figure about any subject under the sun in Nigeria. No-one knows what the infantile mortality rate is—except that it is very high indeed—no one knows what the expectation of life is—but it is certainly very low. No-one knows how many people are illiterate, but if one were to say that at the most ten per cent. of the population is educated, one would be erring on the generous side. In the south, the Ibos are thrusting, aggressive, clamorous for education and for responsibility. In the north the Hausa are Mohammedan, good tempered and good mannered, but only beginning to be seized with any desire for education.

As one's ship noses her way into Lagos harbour, the first impression is highly favourable. The broad Atlantic seems calm and tranquil until suddenly it breaks upon coral reefs, or in thunderous surf upon the beaches where palm trees sway lightly against the sky. The harbour itself is busy with shipping, and the Lagos Yacht Club brings an atmosphere of Cowes or the Clyde to the tropical scene. The Lagos fishermen are out with their nets, in boats hewn from the solid trunk, and when suddenly they throw their nets they fall in shimmering, tremulous circles on the water. We edge our way along the Marina, that palm girt boulevard which more than possibly imitates the esplanade of Bournemouth or Bognor. There is the residence of His Excellency the Governor, there is the Secretariat, there is the Legislative Council. There is Lagos putting its best foot forward to please the European resident and impress the newcomer. We soon learnt that behind the white paint of the gleaming fronts of the Marina, there is another side to Lagos.

We take up residence in the beautiful suburb of Ikoya which is mainly occupied by Europeans—although there is no bar against any African who wishes to acquire a house there. The houses are, by European standards, on the palatial side, with vast reception rooms, large bedrooms and all 'mod. cons.', including occasionally an air-conditioning plant which enables one to dispense with a mosquito net. Cameron Road, in which our house is situated, is Scottish-

sounding enough, and the names of most of the streets, although commemorating people who pioneered in Nigeria, are nevertheless reminiscent of Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City. People take the greatest pride in their gardens—and of course they see results. Plants which were put in the day we arrived had grown six to eight inches a few days later. The newer bungalows being built by the Government are not quite so imposing, while here and there a block of flats is arising as quarters for the unattached young civil servant on his first tour.

The race course, a dominating feature of Lagos, is also used for football matches, and it was here that the Nigerian team was welcomed by an ecstatic population after its not too victorious tour of the United Kingdom. The most recent amenity is a very handsome building erected by the United Africa Company to house their departmental store, for Europeans and Africans alike. It is as if a bit of Kensington High Street had been dropped down in West Africa, with a display designed by young African art students and carried out under European supervision. One can buy everything here; chemist's goods, books, gramophones, radio sets, toys, men's and women's wear. There is a provisions store and an excellent wine department. There are men's and women's hair-dressers with the latest type American chairs and all the driers and other impedimenta necessary for the cult of a permanent wave, and here too, although the supervision is European, the hairdressers are African. Some of the girls had been trained in stores in Liverpool. On the top floor there is a restaurant, and, if that does not strike the reader as something specially worth mentioning, it should be pointed out that this is the only café in the whole of West Africa. And it has much more significance than that because it is a public institution, available to all classes and to all colours without restriction. We dropped in for morning coffee as often as we could and were delighted to find Europeans, Africans, Syrians, officers and men from the liners in the harbour, and civil servants spending local leave in Lagos, all sitting happily together and behaving as pleasantly and politely as any similar group in a café in London. This Kingsway Stores is an enormous contribution to European morale in Lagos and an object lesson to the African of the distance that must be travelled before his standards in many things begin to catch up with European.

As one goes round one sees much to admire and much that is encouraging in the family welfare centre, the juvenile court, and the domestic science centre, where the European-trained African lady in charge wisely instructs not so much in European methods of cookery and the like, but in traditional African methods. And then one comes upon the slums of Lagos. They are almost incredible. We know the slums of Glasgow where the density of population

sometimes rises as high as 1,000 persons to the acre. But in Glasgow these are vertical densities in cliff-like tenement buildings. In Lagos where the density at a guess is well over 1,000 persons to the acre, it is a horizontal density with shack leaning against shack in incredible squalor.

It is true that there is a town plan for Lagos, true that there are one or two schemes for the tearing down of the slums and the building up of new suburbs on the outskirts. But this work, it seems, is to be carried out by private enterprise. If private enterprise succeeds in tackling the slum problem of Lagos it will do something that private enterprise has never been able to achieve in any other part of the world. Even at that the layout of the replanned Lagos does not measure up to modern conceptions of town planning. One is staggered to learn that the price of the land on which these slums stand is not less than £20,000 an acre ; it is owned by Africans anxious to obtain the full commercial value for it. One can hardly imagine how such a situation was allowed to arise. If the land has any such value, it is entirely due to the efforts of the British Government and the European traders who have built up the rest of the Lagos community. And if under the machinery of the Central Land Board no one in the United Kingdom proposes to be too tender about the rights of private land owners, one wonders by what mysterious growth of law the African landlord is in such a powerful and privileged position. One could imagine that a vigorous Government would not attempt to buy out any of the landlords but would erect new houses on cheaper land on the periphery and, by the strict enforcement of health and sanitary ordinances, clear up the mess of central Lagos and cause the buildings to be torn down at the landlords' expense.

Lagos teems with life, although for every man who is seen doing a job of work there seem to be twenty others with nothing to do. The Welfare Department, staffed by enthusiasts, is pitted against the most discouraging obstacles. That Lagos however is not Nigeria is impressed upon the visitor wherever he goes. We went straight from the city by air to Kano. Below us stretched in an endless vista the bush and the forest ; dramatically through the sub-continent the great brown sullen Niger cleaved its tortuous way, and then we alighted at Kano airport, on the outskirts of that walled Hausa city, unchanged in a thousand years, which has suddenly become one of the crossroads of the world's air routes. Sign posts point to Nairobi, half a continent away ; to Cairo, Moscow, Los Angeles, Sydney. In the brilliant glare of the sun the dome of the new mosque reflects the curious green of its tiles, its minarets standing white and gold against the brown background of the city. One can pick out the

Emir's palace, the compounds, the jostling crowds in the market place.

Kano is the great groundnuts centre of Nigeria and one of the great terminal points of the Nigerian railway, now fast acquiring new rolling stock not only for goods but for passengers. The Kano-Lagos express will compare with the Golden Arrow when the new coaches come into service in the course of the next month or two. The groundnut pyramids tower along the railway sidings. The Nigerian railway could not cope with the abundant crops in the first seasons after the war, but this year they were not nearly so abundant and most of the pyramids will disappear. One can motor for fifty miles around Kano without coming upon a single groundnut farm. The groundnuts are grown in mixed farms by peasant farmers who bring them to the collection centres or 'canteens' as they are called, where they exchange their crop for money. This they speedily exchange, in turn, for textiles or hardware or provisions from one of the European owned stores, the United Africa Company or John Holt's of Liverpool. The farmers trust the traders and the traders are in the main on the friendliest terms with the Africans. They have studied African taste, too, and in textiles particularly they have to be prepared for changes in fashion. Otherwise the African conservatively buys the same brand of bicycle or of salt as his father and grandfather bought before him. Merchandizing in the American sense has no appeal for the African and merely to change the colour-scheme or the type face of a packet of salt would be to lose the African market. Incidentally, the African buys enormous quantities of salt and seems to eat it in lumps.

Kano market, one of the most incredible places in the world, is filled with thousands of jostling men mostly in Mohammedan dress. Nearly everyone is selling and no one buying ; there is practically nothing that one cannot buy in Kano market from Kano cloth—a home-spun indigo-dyed fabric in narrow lengths—to ju-ju medicines made from indescribable horrors. Here one is in contact with every disease known to man ; there is leprosy, smallpox and tuberculosis. The stench is appalling and one escapes eventually with no other desire than to take a bath into which has been poured an entire bottle of disinfectant. Hundreds of children pursue our car as we leave, demanding "dash" "dash". No one was able to explain to us how this purely Portuguese word came to be so widely used in West Africa.

We visited the Emir in his palace, a wise old man, full of sound advice, a benevolent ruler anxious for the improvement of his people. It was odd to reflect that the Emir of Kano receives a rather higher salary than the Prime Minister of Great Britain. We met Chiromo, the heir apparent, a smiling genial youth who spoke a little English.

The Prime Minister, or more properly the Lord Mayor, the *Serekin Shano*—literally the keeper of the king's cattle—spoke English fluently and had a grasp of all the affairs of the town and of the provinces. He showed us the hospital, handsome, well equipped, well run. We learned that, although every disease was treated in the hospital, the really killing one was cerebro-spinal-meningitis, and that every November thousands of people die of this disease as if of a plague.

We visited the prison, so good compared with conditions outside that we wondered that the population could be kept out. Here we saw murderers by the dozen. They are tried by the Mohammedan courts and execution is only carried out if the relations of the murdered man "claim the penalty". Otherwise eight years is considered a long sentence for murder and is only given where the crime has aggravated features such as the mutilation of the body after death. The prisoners are taught a trade. Spinning machines had been installed for the men, and the women were busy with ordinary domestic chores. It is impossible to do much about the sanitation in the compounds in Kano because since the town is predominantly Mohammedan, the women are mainly in purdah. The only women one sees about the town are the young girls, the very old women and the prostitutes. Since no male sanitary inspector may enter the compound sanitary inspection is carried out by the prostitutes, who are reported to be very good at the job.

Always one was overwhelmed by the sense of the picturesque : by the camel caravans coming in from the desert; by millionaire African traders like Al Hassan dan Tata; by the mud houses painted and coated with white, yellow, blue and maroon, and carrying ornamental *zonquai* on which vultures perched ; by Arabian horsemen wearing chained mail. The cattle round Kano are singularly healthy and give rise to a vast hide and skin industry. Outside Kano there is a huge piggery run by a Syrian and a smaller one run by an African. Some of the old skills still survive and Kano silverware is most attractive and, by our standards, cheap. Here at Kano too is one of the few African ventures which is not entirely individualistic, the Kano Citizens' Trading Company.

Kano and Lagos are the north and south of Nigeria, and the Europeans develop terrific loyalties to the places in which they are settled, so that the African who transposed the usual version of the saying and rendered it : "If the Africans were to leave Nigeria to-morrow, the north would at once be at war with the south," was very near the mark. The north is the neglected province, the south is the area where the money has been spent on education and social development and welfare generally. The north, paying more in taxation, does not like this. Now schools are beginning to arise

there—far too slowly and far too few in number—but there is a beginning.

We motored down through Nigeria and back to Lagos through Zaria, Jos, Majurdi, Enugu, Onitsha, Warri, Buruto, Sapele and Ibadan. We learned something of Nigerian communications—that the roads are intolerable, that the telegraph system works spasmodically and sporadically, that if one wants to get anywhere it is better not to depend on West African airways, and that putting through a telephone call in Lagos is to take part in an unequal struggle between an inefficient service and the B.B.C. Light programme.

It is at Zaria that colonial development and welfare is most clearly seen and there is the Gaskya Institute under Dr. East which is waging a formidable campaign against illiteracy in the north and is bringing new standards of journalism (badly needed) to Nigeria by the publication of *Nigerian Citizen*. Incidentally the *Lagos Times* (published by the same proprietors as the London *Daily Mirror*) is also doing a good job. The West African native press must represent the world's "all time low" in unscrupulous abuse and distortion of the facts.

At Jos one is impressed by the excellence of the Government rest house, superbly situated on the plateau in a way that reminds the visitor of Gleneagles in Scotland or the Banff Hotel in Canada; by the charming pagans; by the fantastic American machinery used by the town mining company. But easily the most exciting things in Nigeria to-day are the great timber development at Sapele and the new university at Ibadan. From the great forests around Sapele great logs from hundred year old trees cut into thirty foot lengths are floated down-stream. They are steamed and put through the plywood factory, a miracle of modern machinery and smooth production planning; going in at one end, a great log is immediately turned into a vast continuous roll, like toilet paper, and, stage by stage, two hours later it is finished plywood of the finest quality. The old saw mill is being brought up to date. When it is finished it will be one of the finest in the world. This is all being done by the African Timber and Plywood Company, a subsidiary of the United Africa Company.

Nearby are the excellent houses erected for the European staff. Nearby too are the deplorable slums of the African population which has grown sevenfold in the last few years. Rents have shot up, and so have food prices. The Company do their best to produce good conditions for African and European staff alike, but when they wished to build five hundred houses, they found themselves up against so many obstacles, among them the desire of the African landlord for a high price for his land and a whole network of Government regulations, so that three years went past before they got permission to go ahead with the development. They have provided club and recreation

facilities and a first rate clinic for Africans and Europeans, but there seems to have been a strange failure on the part of the Government to realize the obligation to see that civic development went hand in hand with industrial development.

Ibadan University is a thing to enthuse over. It is a collection of Army huts (a few miles away a permanent university is being built), but the staff is there, mixed European and African and the students are there—wholly African. The Principal, Dr. Mellanby from Leeds University, is a young man with infinite faith and great organizing ability. Here at Ibadan the colour bar has disappeared. Some of the African staff have European wives, most of them themselves university graduates, and anyone who detests racial discrimination would be overjoyed at the sight of the nursery school at Ibadan, where little black and white boys and girls play and learn together.

What of the future of Nigeria? The time has come for us to make it quite clear that we have no intention of dodging our responsibilities in Nigeria or of quitting Nigeria, if to do so would be to hand over the mass of the Nigerian population to the small educated minority. We must build up an educated Nigerian population. We must see that universal primary education becomes a reality as soon as possible. Only when there is that foundation will true democracy in Nigeria become a possibility. Britain on the whole has done a good job in Nigeria, not by exploiting the Africans but by raising the whole level of native life. It would be a criminal dereliction of duty to yield at this stage to the clamorous demands of a small minority. This the most responsible Africans realize. It is time that the true position was recognized at home.

*(The author was elected Member of Parliament for Rutherglen in 1945.)*

## WHAT COMMUNISM PLANS FOR CHINA

By O. M. GREEN

THE Common Programme adopted by the communists when they formally established their Government in Peking last October consists of 57 articles dealing with internal administration, land, industry, trade, defence, culture and foreign affairs with that insatiable passion for detail in regulation in which the Chinese have no equal. The chief difference between it and the windy pronouncements of the Kuomintang is that it undoubtedly expresses a fixed purpose (except, as will be noted, where the communists say one thing and are already doing the exact opposite) and there is no reason to think that they cannot enforce it.

Two points strike one immediately : first, that in every direction the communists desire to make a complete breach with the past. That was indicated when they made October 1 " Republic Day " (the date of the inauguration of their Government) and not October 10, anniversary of the Revolution of 1911 ; in their perfunctory references to Dr. Sun Yat-sen ; and in their new flag inscribed with "August 27, 1927," date of the so-called " Nanch'ang rising," which the communists regard as the beginning of their State. Throughout the Common Programme the elimination of " the feudal, comprador, fascist, dictatorial Kuomintang rule " is repeatedly stressed ; and Article 17 enacts that " all laws, decrees and judicial systems of the Kuomintang reactionary government are abolished."

The second point is that the assertion that " the State power of the People's Republic of China belongs to the people" is, in the vulgar phrase, just eye-wash. Articles 1 and 12 say :

This Republic realizes the people's democratic dictatorship, led by the working class, based on the alliance of workers and peasants and rallying all democratic classes. . . .

All levels of the People's Congress and all levels of the People's Government are the organs for exercising State power by the people.

It may be recalled that, when the new Government was proclaimed in October by the People's Political Consultative Conference (which is to serve as a sort of Parliament until China is deemed ready to elect a National Congress) much publicity was given to the fact that the P.P.C.C. represented 45 different associations, many of which were not communist ; and that some of these were

represented in the Government ; as evidence of the Communist Republic's essentially democratic nature.

The hollowness of this claim is shown by the limitless powers of the Central People's Government Council, the highest organ of the State. Composed of 56 councillors under the chairmanship of Mao Tse-tung, it makes war, peace and treaties ; controls finance ; enacts and interprets laws of State ; determines administrative policy ; appoints or dismisses the Prime Minister and other Ministers (who form the second organ, the State Administrative Council) and all heads of minor government instruments ; and controls the law courts, appointing or dismissing judges at its own pleasure. Furthermore, when this Council is in recess, all these powers are concentrated in the hands of chairman Mao Tse-tung.

The care with which all power is centralized in this one small body runs through the whole Common Programme. As a matter of concession, perhaps, to China's age-long practice of local self-government, and certainly of necessity in so vast a country, provision is made for people's governments throughout the provinces. But this looks very much like the Victorian practice of giving children a sovereign to carry in their pockets : it was their's, but they must not spend it. Article 15 says :

All levels of the organs of State power shall put into practice democratic centralism. . . . The appointment of the People's Governments at various levels shall be confirmed by the People's Government of the higher level. The People's Government of the lower level shall obey the People's Government of the higher level and all local People's Governments throughout the country shall obey the Central People's Government.

To make assurance doubly sure, Article 19 adds :

People's supervisory organs shall be set up in the People's Governments at county and municipal levels and above to supervise the execution of duties. . . . Individuals or people's organizations have the right to indict before the people's supervisory organs or people's judiciary organs any State organ or any public functionary violating the law or derelict in performing their duties.

The horrid results likely to ensue from this provision are easily imagined. *The Times*' Peking correspondent in an article (January 7), written after he had left China, spoke of the hordes of young people who, after intensive training in Marxist centres, have been "installed in all branches of the Administration, less as administrators than as watch-dogs of the party."

Article 18 enjoining honesty and simplicity in public service and threatening severe punishment for graft, deserves notice. All observers agree that the communists are clean-handed. (So were the nationalists in their early days). Another provision which deserves a good mark (Article 24) is that the armed forces in peace time, when off military duty, "shall systematically take part in agricultural and industrial production." It is to be hoped that such useful occupation will not be too much interrupted by the training in

“a political system of work” provided in Article 21. All soldiers, it has been noticed in Shanghai, and doubtless elsewhere, have to attend daily lectures on Marxism.

The Articles on agriculture and land reform are less explicit than others, probably because so much of China had still to be conquered when the Common Programme was drafted, and land tenure and the mutual relations of peasant and landlord vary in every province. “Land to the tiller” is the general principle. Big estates have been broken up and divided between the peasants, but no attempt yet has been made to institute collectivized farms. It is, however, quite clear that “the tiller” is not to be left to his own devices. Article 34 says :

In all areas where the Agrarian Reform (that is the redistribution of land) has been thoroughly carried out, the People’s Government will take as its central task the organization of the peasants. . . . to develop agricultural production . . . and shall guide the peasants step by step to organize various forms of mutual aid, labour and production co-operation.

In respect of trade and industry, Mao Tse-tung and others have emphasized, in broadcasts and writings, that private enterprise must be permitted and capitalists allowed their profits, to encourage them to use their brains for the nation’s good. Articles 30 and 31 give a clear idea of the intention :

The People’s Government shall encourage the active operation of all private economic enterprises beneficial to the national welfare . . . The economy based on co-operation between State and private capital is of a State capitalist nature. Whenever necessary and possible private capital shall be encouraged to develop in the direction of State capitalism—for example towards joint operations with State-owned enterprises or in joint operations with the State or operation of State-owned enterprises and exploitation of the State-owned resources through the form of concessions.

What this means is already visible in the increasing formation of State bureaux to take over various lines in commerce. Where a merchant has a contract (for the export, say, of bristles or dried eggs) he has to surrender it to the State bureau in return for a part of the profits. What that amounts to is not disclosed. But in Tientsin, which has been longer under the communists than any other big trading centre, British merchants’ experience is that they are being steadily squeezed out of business.

Foreign affairs is too big a subject for this article; but in passing one may note that the first and last clauses of the Common Programme insist most strongly on “the safeguarding of the independence, freedom and integrity of territory and sovereignty of the country.” It will be interesting to see how this squares with the grip exercised by Russia on Manchuria through her possession of its main railways and ports, and on Sinkiang by her monopoly of all air transport and airfields, which she extorted last June from the phantom Nationalist Government already in exile in Canton. Of all the

“unequal treaties” against which China once inveighed so bitterly, the only ones remaining are Russia’s.

Much has been made by the communist papers of Article 5 which promises

freedom of thought, speech, publication, assembly . . . religious belief and freedom to hold processions and demonstrations.

In the article quoted above *The Times* correspondent specially mentions one paper distinguished for its independent criticisms both of Kuomintang and communists, which has been suppressed (as it is officially explained) “in order to put an end to counter-revolutionary propaganda and thus protect the freedom of speech and writing of the people.” So the only freedom permitted is freedom to print what the communists prescribe. Almost their first act after entering Peking was to muzzle all correspondents of foreign papers. And in communist newspaper offices posters have been seen proclaiming that: “Facts are not facts unless they help the revolution.”

The reference to religious belief opens up the question of the future of Christian Missions. At present it looks as if the communists would permit institutions that do work which they need—mission hospitals and big colleges like Yenching at Peking and Cheloo at Tsinanfu, which teach science, engineering and the like. But pastoral work is strictly controlled. Missionaries are pinned to their stations ; they cannot go out on the evangelizing tours which used to be an important part of their work. And in all colleges the students must attend daily classes in Marxism, and those who seem reluctant to embrace it are soon made to understand that their prospects in life are poor.

A moment’s reflection shows that this must be so. Neither a free press connoting independence of thought nor Christianity with its supreme emphasis on the importance of the individual soul is permissible in a communist state. Between the lines of the Common Programme and in daily practical demonstration it can be seen how the communists are setting to work to convert the 430,000,000 of China to their creed.

Nothing is overlooked. In the autumn a conference of artists and writers was held in Peking to instruct them how to devote their work to the furtherance of Marxism. Other conferences for the same purpose have been held of journalists and newspaper managers : the latter were specially enjoined to obtain advertisements “beneficial to the interests of the people.” A “People’s Art Theatre” was opened in Peking to guide the drama on Marxist lines. And of course all “imperialist” films have been expunged from the cinema in favour of scenes from the life of Lenin and of the Chinese people’s revolutionary struggles. It is hardly surprising that attendance at such entertainment has fallen off considerably.

Above all, the communists have set themselves to break down the reverence for family which is the strongest influence in Chinese life. Only by corrupting the young can they hope to convert China. Young people are continually urged to defy their parents. Even little children are not spared. In one of the new primary school books they are taught to repeat : "I do not love Mamma, I do not love Papa, I only love Mao Tse-tung." This has caused no little outcry, but the general trend of education remains the same.

Spies are everywhere. Whether forced labour camps have yet been formed as in Russia is not known, though they seem to be foreshadowed in Article 7 of the Common Programme for "reactionary elements, feudal landlords and bureaucratic capitalists." But mysterious disappearances of individuals and even whole families are reported ; and a man dares not speak openly to a friend for fear the latter should be a communist.

That espionage runs through the whole Communist Party cannot be doubted. It is inherent in the "people's supervisory organs" mentioned above ; and it is the necessity of an administration which concentrates total power in 50 or 60 individuals. They will be spied upon by others greedy for their seats ; and in turn will spy upon all possible rivals. Like the nationalists 30 years ago, the communists have been actuated, and still are, by ideals of national reform. But as the unifying inspiration of external opposition disappears, internal jealousies and hatreds arise. The motive of government is no longer popular welfare but personal fear. Can one not already trace its shadow through the lines of the Common Programme ?

## INDIA AT THE CROSS ROADS

### III. WILL INDIA TAKE THE CHINA ROAD ?

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

INDIA is a hungry land and her masses are condemned to exist within the margins of famine for a long time to come. This and a number of other factors which condition India's development are essentially economic in nature. How to feed India's growing population and how to improve their very low standard of living will remain the basic pre-occupation of Indian leaders for some time to come. The tragedy is that India's problems are parts of a chain of inter-connected economic factors of almost equal magnitude. They are incapable of solution together and could hardly be tackled individually. The approach, however, must be essentially of an economic nature. There are more or less fashionable views which over-estimate the importance of spiritual factors or the influence of Hindu religion as an element of conservation. The fact is that in the rapidly changing social climate of Asia to-day there is a limit to what even illiterate masses will endure in misery.

Largely as a result of under-nourishment and lack of medical aid, about 65 per cent of India's people die before they reach the age of 30 and no mother has better than a half chance of bringing up her child to a wage-earning age ; every second dead in this sad country is under ten\*. Nor is the picture in the field of production more cheerful. While a German or English farmer produces over 2,000lb of wheat to the acre, his Indian counterpart takes out barely 700lb. Against the Italian rice-planter's 4,500lb production per acre, or the Egyptian's 3,000lb, the Indian hardly manages more than 1,200lb. In cotton, India's average output (89lb per acre) is only one-seventh of the Egyptian's and one-third of the United States. The average milk-yield of the Indian cow is only a little over 600lb per year compared to the over 5,400lb of the British. Figures telling the same depressing tale could be quoted from any field of agricultural activity†. Meanwhile the signs of development in the wrong direction are increasing. In 1921 among every 1,000 Indian cultivators 291 were without land. By 1931 this figure rose to 407 and, owing to the outdated law of inheri-

\*Report of All-India Conference of Medical Research Workers, and *The Indian Rural Problem* by Sir Manilal B. Nanavati and J. J. Anjaria.

†Cfr. *The Indian Rural Problem*.

tance, it is likely that by now every second of India's cultivators is without land and has to hire himself out. These are merely random figures typical of the arrested development, inefficiency and backwardness of India's economy. They are also an index of the improbability of quick change. If avoidable human suffering and degradation could be expressed in *per-capita* international units, there is little doubt that "non-violent" India would top the list.

It is evident from all this that only a live public opinion and a very strong central government fully conscious of its short-range purposes could attempt to tackle India's multitudinous problems. Near the end of the 1939-1945 war there was a considerable amount of discussion in Great Britain about the decline of efficiency and stamina of the British worker as a result of five years of meagre diet. The Indian masses have been subsisting for decades if not for centuries, on a diet incomparably lower than anything British workers had to put up with even during the darkest months of the submarine war. Moreover, India's masses are ridden with a multitude of destructive diseases to an extent undreamed of by uninformed outsiders. These handicaps, aggravated by a terrible climate, should at least hint of the physical and psychological obstacles which would make the imposition of quick change on an apathetic and physically weak population almost impossible.\* One often feels that it is no service to the Indian peoples to indulge in the repetition of the flamboyant and ridiculously optimistic statements put out by some of their leaders for propaganda purposes. The statement of the stark and unalterable truth can help at least to assess real possibilities.

Projected against this depressing background, India is ruled by a declining Party which has power without purpose and there are no signs that within a short time a sufficiently organized nation-wide opposition would arise constitutionally to replace the present Government and to carry out reforms which can stand no postponement.†

All this might be taken to imply that India is inevitably on the way to the "China road". It is true that the factors which brought about social revolution in China are equally present in the India of to-day. There are, however, certain factors which limit the likeness of the two situations. Because of the atmosphere of Hindu religion, of an enervating climate, and of the apathy following from the physical and psychological conditions of most of the population, the margin of social stability in India is probably much wider than it was in China. In other words, a much slighter improvement in the living conditions of Indians would bar the way to the forcible change that

\*According to estimates, over 100 million people suffer from malaria.

†See the first and second articles in the January and February 1950 issues of THE FORTNIGHTLY:—"The Decline of Congress" and "Is an Opposition arising in India?"

has come about in China. The short-range, and therefore more quickly alterable, factors of present-day Indian society are almost exclusively economic. The halt to inflation ; reduction in military expenses ; reduction of the external trade deficit, and the extension of productive resources are probably the most important of these short-range targets. If any, or some of these, could be altered decisively for the better during the next few months, the change might widen the margin of social security sufficiently to maintain social apathy against social unrest.

None of these is more urgent than the early reduction of military expenses. These unproductively spent millions could be diverted into channels which would promote the country's economic potential and check inflation. It is one of the oddest things in an already very odd world that two of the poorest countries, equally threatened by social upheaval, should help the advance of Communism by spending more than half their central revenue on armaments aimed at each other.\* The fanatical Kashmir adventure may gain a Province to India but it may also lose the Indian Republic to Communism.

India's national income has been declining for some years and the decline has been particularly marked during the last year. Agricultural production during the past two years has been three to seven per cent less than between 1936-1939. Industrial output shows a similar decline of five to six per cent over 1948 which already was considerably lower than during the peak year of wartime production in 1943-1944. Administrative costs are mounting without visible improvement in efficiency, while exports cannot catch up with imports. The necessity to import each year some ten to 16 per cent more food-stuffs than is produced indigenously (between two and four million tons, according to the monsoon) represents an intolerable burden on India's resources. Meanwhile, it is estimated, that India's rate of national savings has dropped from about six per cent before the war to a "negative savings rate". Thus, Indians are depleting reserves which, normally, could be invested to expand the nation's small productive resources. In simple terms all this means that the average Indian is worse off to-day than he was two years ago (largely thanks to the "guns rather than rice" policy) and certain factors make it unlikely that his lot will rapidly improve. In fact, with the enormous increase in population, unless some dramatic change intervenes, economic progress is bound to stagnate, and ideologies advocating violent change will further gain ground.

To bring about any change in the economic factors India would have to carry out certain basic reforms (land-reform above all),

\*In 1948 India spent 47 per cent and Pakistan 55 per cent of their central revenue on military expenses. For the U.S.A. it was 25, for the U.S.S.R. 17 and for the U.K. 13 per cent. To-day, it is estimated, India spends close on 60 per cent.

long overdue and increasingly urgent in the present Asiatic context. Certain mass-desires are gropingly formulating themselves in India to-day and gradually they must become irresistible. Should India's revolutionaries be given the opportunity to harness these popular desires, no political or police power will be able to stand in their way. The similarity between the Chinese and Indian situations is most conspicuous in this field. Congress, like the Kuomintang, may help the Communists to popularity and then into power by handing them over the chance of gratifying the masses with reforms Congress is unwilling or unable to accomplish.

In a nutshell this is the problem of Indian political leadership. It is symbolically focused in the personality of Pandit Nehru himself. An idealist nationalist, he has been wedded to liberal reformism all his life long. To-day, two years after power came his way, most observers agree that the change from rebel to leader made him a tired pessimist, overwhelmed by the problems facing him. Underneath his many-sided activities, his problem is that of the Asian gradualist. It is the dilemma between preservation and the plunge into the untried. On the one hand there is the task of "keeping together" the turbulent, undisciplined separatism-ridden Mother India. On the other, is the urgent and imperative need for change and to adjust inert Indian society to contemporary realities. The fateful choice produces hesitation, and hesitation in Asia in 1950 means Conservatism. A conservative under threat easily becomes a "reactionary". The solution to Pandit Nehru's dilemma is not easy : for example, one of the most urgent reforms in India is the ridding of the agricultural masses of the landlord and the money-lender. This, inevitably, would lead to the chain-reaction typical of all Indian problems. Distribution of land, or the creation of collective or co-operative units on a large scale, would pose enormously complicated technical problems of administration, would immediately raise the question of agricultural implements, seeds, fertilizers, improvement in methods, and so on. Each of these would touch off a second line of problems like industrial production, the mass-attack on illiteracy, the availability of trained craftsmen, and the rest. These are sufficient to cool off the most ardent reformer however sincere he may be. The hard, unalterable and cruel fact remains, however, that unless land reform is carried out, some one else will carry it out simply because it must be done.

The strange amalgam, of greedy traders and industrialists and non-violent and confused philosophers, which dictates the political climate of Congress Government, is probably incapable of facing facts. Politically, the impact of Chinese events has been less in India than one would have expected. This is due partly to the limitations of the men in power (with the exception of Pandit Nehru) and

to the illiteracy and isolation of the masses. But it was mainly due to a complacent belief in a mountain range as a barrier to explosive ideas. Without rapid change in this attitude, and if India's more farsighted leaders are not able to awaken their self-satisfied entourage, events will undoubtedly take their inevitable course. With suitable outside help, the red river may begin to roll down from the Himalayas, enveloping first Assam and Bengal and continuing its slow but sure journey along the plains of India.

At one extreme 57 per cent of India's area supports only 17.5 per cent of the population with a density of below 150 per square mile ; at the other end 30 per cent of the people are crowded in 6.4 per cent of the area with a density of 600 and more. It is not without significance that the regions where India's Communist Party is most influential, and where actual armed risings have already occurred, are the most over-populated Provinces and States. This applies primarily to Bengal (with 708 people to each square mile), to the United Provinces (with 518) and to the south-western coast, notably to Cochin and Travancore States (with 953 and 792 density respectively). Moreover, Bengal has been the problem province of India for some time. Partition has dislocated its economy, its population has the most revolutionary of Indian traditions and its capital, Calcutta, has the unenviable distinction of being the largest and ugliest slum region on earth. In addition Bengal is the nearest among India's important regions to the communist troubled areas of Asia. Demonstrations, shootings with fatal casualties and daring revolutionary actions in Bengal, but particularly in Calcutta, occupy the pages of the Indian press with monotonous regularity. Could an army of peasant stock, like the Indian army of to-day, be relied on to fight the eventual beneficiaries of land reform and other popular social and political changes ? The results of the military occupation of the Nalgonda and Warangal districts (of Hyderabad) are not entirely reassuring in this respect. The actual danger is not that India might be " taken over " by a revolutionary régime, as happened in some small and tightly centralized European states, but rather that a revolutionary group relying on the transitory enthusiasm generated by quick and drastic agricultural reforms, might " dig in " in one or more provinces, rely on indigenous popular support and armed assistance from beyond the borders, and establish itself with the skilful manipulation of separatist and communal passions. In such an eventuality it is more likely than not that India would gradually dissolve into mutually antagonistic regions and become a " super-Greece ".

The fundamental difference between the Chinese and the Indian situation is, therefore, in the nature of the margin which lies between continuity and change. In simpler terms, a full rice-bowl and a

certain degree of administrative efficiency might keep India for a long time immune from Communism. To-day the Indian masses have neither a full rice-bowl nor a satisfactory administration. But because the margins are relatively wider in the case of India, western political advice has a more comfortable terrain in helping to establish where the weak points are, where assistance could be used and where the personalities are on whom to count in the establishment of a régime to save India from Communism.

The first conclusion probably would be that the war in Kashmir must be stopped at whatever cost in prestige or frustrated passions. The second, that the National Congress is no longer capable of regeneration and is not a suitable instrument for carrying out the reforms which alone can insure India's survival outside the communist orbit. The third conclusion might be that an emergency Government, composed of all able and qualified leaders irrespective of party affiliations, should be formed to formulate a bold plan of social reform, economic reconstruction and administrative cleansing.

Such a new approach, however, would be worthless without that psychological element of mass enthusiasm which alone could supply the *élan* required to tackle India's problems. Certain facts have to be faced squarely and without sentimental phraseology even if this would mean a painful new departure for certain influential elements. India is in very bad shape and in very serious danger of social revolution. If Socialism is the only genuine Conservatism left in the Europe of to-day, this is doubly true of revolutionary Asia where the accumulated and neglected problems could not possibly be tackled but on the basis of hard, painful and drastic planning. Such a new approach would have to borrow heavily from the vocabulary and from the methods of the early Soviet days in order to spare India the Soviet experiment. Whatever the political considerations may be, it is undeniable that the Soviet experience in the field of economic planning, in modernization of agriculture, in the fight against disease or in the attack on mass illiteracy, has enormous relevance to the present situation in India. Only such a basically new approach, preaching the common denominator of economic self-interest and the hope of improved standards for all peoples of the Indian Peninsula, could raise the masses out of the mud of accumulated sectional antagonisms, communal hatreds and artificially fanned rivalries. Only such a sweepingly new approach could bring about a solution in the Kashmir dispute by convincing both sides that the economic interests of their subjects, their future living standards and their political safety are superior in importance to any issue involved in the hostilities. Only hope in a better future can supply the required verve.

Any new departure in India would require the active support of the industrially advanced nations. This means assistance

on a scale far larger than what can be expected at present from President Truman's Point Four programme. The question has to be posed in all earnestness how much is it worth in cash to prevent strengthening the communist camp with the addition of one-sixth of humanity to its cause ? It would have to be regarded as an international insurance against the probability of another war and it is almost certain that even large-scale financial assistance to India (and large-scale it would have to be) would amount to only a fraction of what is spent on the preparation for war.

The existing Indian Government consists of people who gained popular support as leaders in the fight for national independence. It is already clear that they are not making enough visible improvements in the condition of life of their followers to retain their support. Unless they become admittedly authoritarian they cannot hope to transform their economic system or to reform their institutions in time. Unless, however, they produce results quickly, people will, in any case, turn away from their democratic façade and choose a totalitarian system in anticipation of results. This is the political dilemma of India. But the dilemma is more apparent than real. The film-set of western democracy is too flimsy in India to deceive any observer. However commendable the democratic sentiments expressed in India's new Republican Constitution might be, no observer can have the slightest doubt that they have little contact with reality and have only a meagre chance of being translated into practice within the foreseeable future. If years of immensely costly attempts to win over highly developed Germans to the ideals of north-Atlantic democracy have so conspicuously failed, it is hard to see how such attempts could be more than the shirking of real issues in a country so vastly different in every respect from the lands where this democracy has been more or less realized. The handful of leaders who rule India to-day, and who are the only links between western ideals and the Indian masses, are associated with a party increasingly discredited in the eyes of the disillusioned Indian millions, and the influence of Gandhi, notwithstanding continuous lip-service, is rapidly fading. Extreme forces are hammering away to exploit discontent and the democratic façade is cracking for lack of foundations. India, like all countries in need of a huge effort to rectify the past, is drifting the totalitarian way. The question is merely whether it is going to be the totalitarianism of a privileged minority (as, hardly concealed, it is to-day) or totalitarianism with a popular content and with hope written on its flag. In other words the choice is between stop-gap solutions while drifting, or the conscious imposition of hardship and sacrifice on a generation in the interest of future generations who might, at least, enjoy the fruits of democracy.

## THE CONQUEST OF SPACE

BY ARTHUR C. CLARKE

SINCE the earliest times, the idea of travel to other worlds has been a popular and ever-recurring theme in literature, but only in the last few decades has it become a matter of serious scientific study. Once the conquest of the air had been assured, it was inevitable that men should turn their thoughts to the next logical step in the exploration of space, and during the years after the 1914-1918 war the foundations of the new science of 'astronautics' were securely laid by a number of European mathematicians and engineers, notably the Rumanian, Hermann Oberth. Not until 1942, however, did these theoretical studies see their first large-scale application. In October of that year, under conditions of extreme secrecy, the first V.2 rocket rose from the Baltic shore to reach altitudes and speeds never before attained by any man-made object. Although V.2 had been designed as a weapon of war, it was constructed according to the principles laid down by Oberth for rocket-propelled spaceships, and during its development many of the fundamental problems of interplanetary flight had been solved.

There are two basic differences between inter-planetary travel and the familiar forms of terrestrial transport. Since astronomical space is an almost perfect vacuum, a vehicle capable of crossing it must have a means of propulsion independent of any surrounding medium. The rocket is unique among prime movers in fulfilling this requirement, for its fuel supply is completely self-contained and its thrust is produced by the recoil, within the rocket nozzle, of the ejected gases—tons of matter being expelled at speeds of many thousands of miles an hour. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the rocket does not, as is commonly believed, operate by "pushing on the air behind it" and in fact the air is a considerable hindrance to its efficient working as it reduces the velocity of the jet. The thrust developed by a V.2 motor, for example, increased by about ten per cent as the projectile left the atmosphere, and when it reached its greatest velocity, at an altitude of 20 miles, it was developing over 600,000 horse-power.

Rocket motors can therefore be used not only to enable a spaceship to escape from the earth, but also to steer it in space and to slow it down to make safe landing on another planet, even if that planet possesses no atmosphere. The method of propulsion being available,

the next problem of 'astronautics' is that of providing sufficient energy (in the shape of suitable fuels) for any mission which is contemplated ; and here we encounter the second great difference between space-flight and terrestrial travel. A rocket operates most efficiently by building up a very high speed as quickly as possible, and then proceeding under momentum, like a shell, until it reaches its destination. It is always possible to calculate the initial speed necessary for any journey, whether it be from Germany to London or from earth to moon, and once the rocket has attained this speed it need do no more work and can turn off its fuel supply. On the five minute flight from Europe, the V.2 rocket used its motors for the first minute only: on an inter-planetary journey lasting many months a spaceship would be "under power" for no more than the first ten minutes. During the rest of its voyage it would be travelling as freely and as effortlessly as a comet on its path round the sun and indeed along precisely the same type of orbit.

The greatest speed so far reached by a rocket is 5,000 m.p.h., and the speed necessary to escape from the earth is five times this value. It is clear, therefore, that much work must be done before it becomes possible to send even a small, radio-equipped missile to the moon, though there is little doubt that this feat will be achieved in the next decade.

The maximum speed attained by a rocket is set by two factors—the amount of fuel it can carry, and the jet velocity produced by this fuel. It can be easily shown that with all the chemical mixtures now known, or indeed likely to be discovered, enormous quantities of propellant would be needed to enable a space-ship to make the journey to the moon. As a very rough figure it may be said that a thousand tons of chemical fuel would be necessary to take one ton of pay-load to the moon. Even this figure assumes the existence of propellents and motors considerably better than any known to-day, though probably available within the next few years.

At first sight it would seem an engineering impossibility to build a rocket with an empty weight of a few tons, yet capable of carrying thousands of tons of fuel. It can be done, however, by using the subterfuge of the "step" or multi-stage rocket. Here, one large rocket carries a smaller one until its fuel is exhausted, when the lower component drops off and the smaller machine, already at a great height and travelling at a considerable speed, starts its own motors. The second "step" may carry a further, still smaller rocket, and by repeating this process any desired final speed may be attained—at the cost of a very large initial weight.

The step principle is very important, and has been successfully used in practice both in Germany and the United States. At the moment the altitude record is held by the upper component of a two-stage

rocket, which was carried by a V.2 to a height of 20 miles, and then went on alone to reach a final altitude of 250 miles. However, this is not a complete solution to the problem of space-flight, unless we are to contemplate building vessels of truly astronomical size.

There are two ways in which this difficulty may be overcome. The first lies in the development of propellents very much more powerful than any known to-day, by the utilization of atomic energy. This is a problem which presents peculiar difficulties, but the promise it holds may be judged by the fact that the few pounds of fissile matter used in the first atomic bombs released enough energy to carry a thousand tons to the moon and back. It would not seem too optimistic to hope that a few per cent of this energy may be harnessed for propulsion.

Numerous theoretical studies of the "atomic rocket" have now been made, and several organizations in the United States (including the Fairchild Corporation under a contract from the Atomic Energy Commission) are working on the problem. At present the only practical solution seems to lie in the development of "piles" or nuclear reactors which can function at very high temperatures—several thousand degrees—and can thus heat a light gas such as hydrogen which will then expand and produce a high-velocity jet. The resulting device would be exactly analogous to the chemical rocket except that there would be no actual combustion and all the heating of the exhaust gases would be obtained by nuclear instead of chemical reactions.

It would be rash to predict how long the development of such motors may take : it might well require ten or twenty years, but on the other hand, as so often happens in practice, some alternative solution may arise at an earlier date. If present rocket-jet speeds can be increased by a factor of from five to ten (and in theory atomic energy would enable them to be increased by many thousands) the exploration of all the nearer planets would become an immediate possibility.

An alternative and extremely interesting attempt to overcome the fuel difficulty involves the use of what have been called 'orbital satellites' or 'space-stations'. A body given a horizontal speed of 18,000 m.p.h. just above the atmosphere would continue to circle the earth indefinitely, without any expenditure of power, balancing the pull of gravity against centrifugal force. It would become a second moon and could never fall down unless it deliberately reduced its speed. The achievement of such a circular orbit is obviously much simpler than the attainment of escape velocity (which, as we have seen, requires a speed of 25,000 m.p.h.) and step-rockets capable of doing this should become available in the near future. They could contribute very greatly not only to our knowledge of astronomy but also of our own planet, for they could carry a great variety of recording ins-

truments and broadcast their readings back to ground stations. This technique of 'telemetering' information is already highly developed, and the V.2 rockets fired for experimental purposes in the United States now transmit, simultaneously, the readings of scores of thermocouples, pressure gauges, cosmic ray counters and other instruments.

Once it became possible to establish rockets in such permanent orbits, the next step would be to send up a number of machines simultaneously into the same orbit, and then transfer all the excess fuel into a single machine. This rocket, its tanks replenished, would then need an additional velocity of only 7,000 m.p.h. to escape from the earth, as compared with the 25,000 m.p.h. it would require to do this in a single operation without refuelling.

At first sight, such a feat seems quite fantastic, if only because of the enormous speeds involved. But it must be remembered that, relative to each other, all the rockets would be at rest, since each would have exactly the same orbital speed. Their velocities would no more inconvenience them than the earth's much higher speed of movement round the sun worries us in our everyday affairs. They would also be quite weightless, since they would be in the condition known as 'free-fall', and any transfer of material would thus require the minimum of effort.

Such orbital refuelling techniques, with more complex variations involving the use of subsidiary orbits around the planet being visited, might make space-flight possible even without the aid of nuclear energy, since they would have the effect of breaking up an interplanetary voyage into several stages. (It might be worth recalling that there would be no trans-Atlantic flying even to-day if every aircraft had to carry fuel for the complete round trip.)

Orbital techniques may still be essential even when nuclear propulsion is fully developed, for the danger of radioactive contamination may make it impossible to use atomic rockets inside the atmosphere. If this should be the case, the orbiting condition will be reached by chemical propellents, and nuclear propulsion will only be used when the spaceship is some hundreds of miles from the earth.

Quite apart from their uses as stepping-stones to space, these orbits open up many other possibilities of great interest and importance. Elaborate designs have been drawn up for permanent 'space-stations', carried up section by section and then assembled (by men working in pressurized suits) to act as observatories. These would make feasible the carrying out of much work, in many fields of science, which is quite impossible here at the bottom of the atmosphere. It is seldom realized, for example, how severely astronomy is handicapped by the layer of air above us. The giant telescopes we possess, even those situated on mountain tops, can only be used to full advantage on a

few nights of the year, but out in space observational conditions would always be perfect.

More immediately practical applications of the space-station would lie in the fields of weather forecasting and radio transmission. The impossibility of sending ultra-short-wave signals, such as television, much beyond the visible horizon is well-known. Two or three orbital relay stations, however, could provide complete television coverage over the entire planet for about the same power as the present Sutton Coldfield transmitter. They could also replace, far more efficiently, the whole of the world's existing system of radio and cable networks, and could provide many types of service which are now impossible.

At the end of the European war the extensive studies of the German rocket experts on the possibilities of orbital satellites came to the attention of the United States armed forces, each of which characteristically set up its own organization to look into the matter. The unification of these projects was announced by the Secretary of State for Defence in 1948, and some of the work done for the Air Force by a group known as the Rand Corporation (originally part of the Douglas Aircraft Corporation) has now been declassified. One of the most interesting of these reports is a detailed statistical study of the danger presented to space-rockets by meteors—a danger which is found to be negligible, at least on the shorter inter-planetary voyages.

An enormous research effort is now being devoted to rocket propulsion, and although much of this work is for military purposes there is little fundamental difference between a long-range guided missile and a manned space-ship. Overcoming the technical difficulties in one field will automatically solve those in the other. The only additional problems, such as air-conditioning and temperature control, set by the man-carrying rocket do not, with one exception, present anything new: they have already been encountered in the design of high-altitude aircraft.

The only new factor is that of weightlessness. Once a space-ship had reached its required initial velocity, then for the whole of the rest of its voyage it would be "falling free" and its occupants—like people in a lift cage when the cable had broken—would be falling with it and so would have no sensation of weight. The consequences of this have often been described in fiction, but it is not known what the physical effects would be over prolonged periods of time (five days on the lunar voyage, or 145 and 240 days for the journeys to Venus and Mars respectively). If they are found to be dangerous, then all the sensations of normal weight can be restored, at the price of some mechanical inconvenience, by slowly rotating the space-ship about its axis and thus producing an outward centrifugal force.

It might be pointed out that no difficulty is likely to be caused by too

high an acceleration at the take-off of a space-ship. The accelerations produced in a large rocket are considerably less than those experienced by fighter pilots in high-speed aerobatics.

The sequence, though not the time-scale, of future development in 'astronautics' now seems fairly clear. First will come the multi-step orbital rockets, using fuels available to-day to project a few pounds of instruments into stable orbits some hundreds of miles above the earth. A little later, the first contact with the moon will be made by similar machines, tracked by radar to the moment of their impact, which would be easily visible in small telescopes. It should next be possible to send missiles round the moon, carrying television equipment which would give us our first glimpse of that world's hidden face.

While this exploration-by-proxy is proceeding, the much more difficult task of building rockets large enough to carry men and to bring them back safely to earth will be under way. At the close of the war, the Germans were working on a winged version of V.2 for this purpose, and in the United States, men have flown at nearly 2,000 m.p.h. in rocket aircraft with many of the characteristics of short-range space-ships.

The next twenty-five years will see manned flights to altitudes of hundreds, then thousands, of miles, and possibly the first circumnavigation of the moon. The landing on our satellite may be expected some time in the last quarter of the century, and the exploration of space will have begun in earnest.

The problems of maintaining life on the moon, in the virtual absence of the atmosphere and under somewhat extreme conditions of temperature, are very great but by no means insoluble. Although the moon itself is almost certainly lifeless and perhaps of little intrinsic interest its supreme importance lies in the fact that, as a base for inter-planetary exploration, it is immensely superior to the earth. A journey to Mars would be of virtually the same length and duration whether one started from earth or moon, but owing to the moon's low gravity a far smaller amount of fuel would be needed in the latter case. Great efforts will be made to establish bases on the moon and to locate sources of the fairly common elements (particularly hydrogen) which appear to be the most suitable propellents for atomic rockets. There would be no need to look for fissile material, since the amounts needed would be relatively small and could be easily obtained from earth.

Once the moon had been reached, the exploration of the other planets would follow almost automatically. Mars and Venus, our nearest neighbours in space, would first be reconnoitered by remotely-controlled, expendable rockets. (It might be of interest to remark here that even a V.2, if it started from space in the earth's orbit, could reach Venus with full pay-load !) Later, there would be

circumnavigations by manned ships which would not attempt a landing but would make extensive observations and return to earth.

Beyond this, we enter the realm of speculation. Within a lifetime we may be exploiting Mars and Venus and looking further afield to the outer giants and their vast families of moons. No-one can guess what we may find on these worlds, or what effects they may have on our civilization and our ways of thought. The conquest of space will change our lives at least as much as the development of aviation, which in less than fifty years grew from a fantastic dream to one of the world's greatest industries.

And the purpose of all this stupendous effort ? There are countless ways of justifying it : in the long run, the purely scientific results would be ample reward, for to each century science pays back with compound interest the investments of the last. Yet beyond these purely practical considerations there lies a deeper motive, an impulse which all men must have felt who have ever watched the stars come out in the stillness of a summer evening. It is the desire to know, whatever the consequences may be, whether or not man is alone in an empty universe.

*(Mr. Clarke, is the author of Interplanetary Flight, a general technical introduction to the problems of 'astronautics' to be published shortly.)*

## THE TRAGEDY OF ALGER HISS

BY S. K. RATCLIFFE

ON January 25, 1950, in a New York federal Court, Alger Hiss was convicted of perjury and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. After 18 months of investigation and two prolonged trials the affair remains a complete mystery, the end of which is not in sight. Until this black shadow fell across him Alger Hiss was an exceptionally fortunate man. He enjoyed a special position in the public service and the esteem of all his senior colleagues. His disaster is without precedent or parallel.

Since an early stage of the Roosevelt régime there has been kept alive in Washington a committee of the House of Representatives inquiring into un-American activities. In the summer of 1948 a repentant woman spy, who had worked for the Russian underground, made a confession which implicated civil servants and other Americans in a network of espionage. She named one Whittaker Chambers as a Communist and an important secret agent who had obtained documents from the Department of State. When these disclosures began he was one of the senior editors of the weekly *Time* earning a salary of \$30,000. Called before the House Committee, he offered the first instalment of a deadly narrative which, startling enough as an American life-story, sounded altogether fantastic in regard to the officials he accused.

He described himself as a former Communist who had toiled for the party with fanatical devotion. In his last stage he had been engaged in conveying documents from public departments to secret agents of Moscow. He named several of his contacts, giving first place to Alger Hiss who, having towards the end of the war held a position of trust under the Secretary of State, had passed thence to the headship of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Mr. Chambers swore that Alger Hiss had been a Communist acting with himself for some four years in enterprises of a treasonable character.

It would hardly be possible to over-state the sensation caused by these charges. Summoned before the House Committee, Alger Hiss met them with a cold and scornful denial. He had never been a Communist ; he did not know Mr. Chambers ; the whole thing was an invention. There appeared to be not one square-inch of common ground between the two men. They both spoke in downright terms.

The only possible inference was that one or the other was a hard liar.

For several reasons the House Committee did not seem anxious to take Mr. Chambers seriously, but an impulsive action by Alger Hiss himself made all the difference. The proceedings of a committee of Congress are privileged; Alger Hiss dared Mr. Chambers to repeat his statements *en plein air*, and this he did in a broadcast interview. Thereupon Alger Hiss brought suit for slander in a Baltimore court, claiming £75,000 damages.

The House Committee now became active and, as the reports indicated, some of its members behaved rather as prosecutors than as legislators engaged in an inquiry. Alger Hiss was subjected to relentless questioning on the basis of particulars supplied by Mr. Chambers. These were related partly to the transfer of papers and partly to a number of transactions, including loans of money, the purchase of a car, and the letting of a flat in Washington. Alger Hiss did not maintain his first denials without modification; his memory became less rigid. Whittaker Chambers, he thought, must be a freelance journalist whom he had known as George Crosley and to whom he had given help, with anything but satisfactory results. He demanded a face-to-face test, and there followed a comedic scene in an hotel room, amid crowding reporters and flashing cameras. Mr. Hiss peered into Mr. Chambers's mouth in order to make out whether this man with skilfully reconstructed dentures was the Crosley he remembered with noticeably bad teeth. In the end he came out with, "You are George Crosley!" Mr. Chambers, who admitted the use of more than a dozen aliases, declared that George Crosley was not one of them.

The first long examination conducted by the House Committee went somewhat to the detriment of Alger Hiss. An amplification of his first denials, in full force, was generally expected, but he was cautious and evasive. He repeatedly guarded himself with "to the best of my recollection" and similar phrases. Long afterwards, when the trials were over, Mr. Chambers said that Alger Hiss had lost the battle in this initial stage by reason of the manner in which his answers were given.

In the meantime Mr. Chambers was broadening his plan of attack. He produced a batch of papers, copies of documents from the State Department, that had lain for ten years in a Brooklyn house, and then, by a spectacular stroke, added a microfilm of others found in a pumpkin growing on the vegetable patch of his Maryland farm. This process of bringing out material in relays he explained by reference to his own state of mind. He had no enmity towards Alger Hiss, and no wish to destroy an old colleague. But he had come to realize the full evil of the conspiracy against which all good Americans were

fighting. That had to be uprooted, without thought of consequence to any individual.

In record and personality the protagonists in this amazing affair make a contrast as striking as even America could provide. Alger Hiss is the son of a Baltimore merchant, a graduate of Johns Hopkins University and the Harvard Law School. He entered upon his career with all the advantages. He served as pupil-secretary to the eminent Justice O. W. Holmes, and spent 14 years in two Government offices. His rise in the State Department was smooth and rapid. He had the right training and manner, good looks, wide knowledge, and manifest ambition. He became deputy chief of the special political division and was secretary-general of the San Francisco conference at which the United Nations took shape. He had been at Yalta as a member of Roosevelt's advisory group. In 1947 he left Washington, having been appointed president of the Carnegie Endowment, a civic foundation unexcelled for responsibility and conservatism. His supporters comprised an impressive company of public men, so that he could step with full enjoyment into a comfortable office and \$20,000 a year. All men spoke well of Alger Hiss.

Whittaker Chambers, on the contrary, is a product of the social conflict and frustration which constitute so large a section of the American scene on its underside. The son of an unsuccessful commercial artist, he was schooled in Long Island and went through the not uncommon experience of adolescent rovings and many jobs with some questionable episodes. He managed to enter Columbia University, New York, but was expelled on account of a blasphemous play. He made a suicide pact with a brother who went through with it. A trip to Europe convinced Mr. Chambers that the old civilization was doomed, and the Communist manifesto came to him as the word of light. He joined the American Communist Party and threw himself into the work, mainly writing. For a brief spell he was editor of the *Daily Worker*. In 1932 he was ordered to make a complete disguise, go under cover, and devote himself to the Russian spring. This he did for six years, until April 1938 when he left the party, renounced its beliefs, and hid himself from the presumably revengeful comrades. He was self-educated in an unusual fashion. He knew several languages and was interested in philosophy and theology. These acquirements were of value in the hard fight for reputable status, and in due time he reached the editorial board of *Time*. Having abjured atheistic Communism, he was baptized in the Episcopal Church and a few months later joined the Society of Friends. (Alger Hiss's wife, by the way, is a birthright Quaker.)

Before the House Committee and a New York grand jury, as also before the F.B.I., Mr. Chambers went into unlimited self-condemnation. His obedience to the Communist Party, he said

had been unqualified and so was his acceptance of its non-moral creed. Promises were made to be broken. Honesty and good faith were words without meaning, an oath was nothing. Hence after his conversion he could make confession of systematic lying, obtaining a passport in the name of a dead child, and deliberate perjury under oath on at least seven occasions. He explained that he had encountered no difficulty in finding confederates in Government Departments. Indeed in the matter of giving out documents the initiative came from Alger Hiss. Again and again Mr. Chambers went over the story of his association with Alger Hiss. He averred that it was not confined to departmental treachery but included mutual visits, long journeys by car, drinking parties, and even shared holidays. When the resolve to free himself was arrived at, he said, he went to the Hisses and begged them to come out with him. In an emotional scene they told him this was impossible.

The most startling point of Whittaker Chambers's narrative was concerned with the treatment of the documents that were alleged to reach him through Alger Hiss. They were all, he declared, copied by Mrs. Hiss, who was an ardent party member frequently asking for more. She used an old Woodstock typewriter which turned out to be the most effective item in the circumstantial evidence. The originals, said Mr. Chambers, were taken home by Alger Hiss for immediate copying. Some he took himself to Baltimore for the photographer, and these he returned straightway. This singular routine involved a double railway journey, often late at night, between Washington and Baltimore. The whole body of Mr. Chambers's testimony was confirmed by his wife, who added particulars regarding the Hisses' domestic arrangements and the furnishing of their several homes. During many days of cross-examination in the two trials the Chambers couple went over the points of their bewildering tale, only to be met with positive and reiterated denials from Alger and Priscilla Hiss. Their evidence did not undergo any material change, although they had to make some adjustments of memory. Their adversaries, they maintained, had built up a complete structure of falsehood.

Alger Hiss went on trial at the instance of a New York grand jury which, not unlike the House Committee, had been concerned for many months with subversive activities. The indictment could not be on any charge other than that of perjury. There were two counts : (1), that he had sworn falsely before the grand jury in reply to the charge of giving out documents, and (2), that he had denied having any dealings with Mr. Chambers after December 1937. The documents in question all belong to January-March 1938.

The American statute of limitations gives complete security to all persons accused of espionage when the alleged offence goes back beyond three years. Hence Alger Hiss had nothing to fear from the

actual charge of handing out secret documents as long ago as 1938, and Mr. Chambers could disclose without misgiving everything in his own record—treasonable practices, perjury and what not. These crimes might be flagitious and far-reaching, but they held no danger for the informer if the dates were in his favour.

The first trial lasted for more than five weeks and ended, on July 8, 1949, with a disagreement of the jury, eight being for conviction. This was a crushing blow for the accused, who had never wavered in his expectation of acquittal. Cool and assured, he had sat throughout, his wife alongside, with a studied air of detachment. His own evidence was given in style and without a tremor. He was described as a superlative witness. A second trial was unavoidable. The Government had no alternative but to prosecute afresh, while for Alger Hiss, of course, vindication was vital. When the case was re-opened in November, before another judge in the same court, the scene had been changed in two important respects.

There was a new counsel for the defence. The first was a melodramatic performer who, we may suspect, was looked upon by the jury as something like a survivor from the group which 40 years ago fought madly over the body of Harry Thaw. His successor Mr. Claude Cross, a corporation lawyer of Boston, displayed a gravely plodding method and a reliance on full notes such as Sir Patrick Hastings, in his recent book, *Cases in Court*, condemns as fatal to a cross examiner. The second point of difference was in the composition of the jury. The first included two women, the second no fewer than eight. As the right of challenge by counsel is in America virtually unchallenged, it is not a little surprising that the defence did not protest against the unbalanced twelve. If this jury, like the other, had been divided in opinion, there would have been little or no surprise. To a dispassionate observer it was soon fairly plain that agreement could not mean acquittal.

The record of the case, together with that of the long preliminary hearings, is of mountainous extent, and for the English student of legal procedure it abounds in material of absorbing interest. Mr. Murphy, the able prosecuting counsel (whose prestige has soared to dazzling height by reason of this success), was so daring at the outset as to tell the jury that if they did not believe Mr. Chambers the Government had no case. The verdict of Guilty is not to be understood on any other basis. The jury accepted as true the detailed Chambers narrative of espionage and close personal relations with Alger and Priscilla Hiss. In doing this, clearly, they were obliged to discount what would in an English court be deemed of the greatest significance, namely, that there was no independent corroborative evidence. Alger Hiss was able to submit evidence to show that they, he and his wife, were not at the holiday places mentioned in

their accusers. The daily life of the two couples during four crucial years was not examined. No witness from Washington was found to testify that the two men had ever been seen together. Time and again the Chamberses said that to the Hisses they were merely Carl and Elsa, no surname being used or known. (This, it may be noted, would be in accord with Party usage, as set forth, for instance, by Arthur Koestler in *The God That Failed*. But in that episode there were no personal relations whatever, whereas Mr. Chambers insisted that the Hisses were close friends of his.)

Beyond question it was the typewriter more than anything else that prevailed with the jury. The tracking of the old Woodstock by the F.B.I after more than ten years was an astonishing piece of detective work, and the technical evidence that followed was awkward for the defence. It appeared to show that of 47 documents all but one had been copied on the machine to which the experts had given minute attention. The jury, also, gave weight to the fact that four of the papers bore brief annotations in Alger Hiss's handwriting. This fact was proof enough that they had passed his desk, and yet was not hard to fit into the theory of theft from the department by another hand. There was no proof that the Woodstock was owned by the Hisses at the time indicated. In a very short statement made to the judge, at the moment of receiving sentence, Alger Hiss affirmed that the facts as to the forging of documents on the typewriter would in due time be brought out.

The case goes to appeal and Alger Hiss is still at liberty. The principle of *sub judice* is not acknowledged in the United States. The public debate continues without restraint.

The issues of this unparalleled mystery spread far beyond the proceedings in the Federal Court and the ruin of Alger Hiss. The whole tragic affair works into the immense design of Congressional investigation with the aim of discrediting Roosevelt and the New Deal and undermining the policies with which President Truman is identified. Moreover, it cannot be considered apart from the present mental and nervous condition of the American public, as revealed in the anti-Red hysteria, the fears concerning Russia, and the popular terror stimulated by unceasing announcements and conjectures concerning the A. and H. bombs. When pleading with the judge not to send Alger Hiss to prison, on the ground that the protracted ordeal was suffering enough, the defence counsel said that the inner truth of the affair was still hidden. That was a true word.

## ROMMEL'S REPUTATION

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR CHARLES GWYNN

IT is not surprising that, in the British Empire and in the U.S.A., Rommel's name and reputation are more widely known than that of any other German general of the last war; for he fought almost exclusively against British and American troops. Yet very little was known of the man himself or his background until the recent publication of Brigadier Young's book.\* Whether it was wise to publish a book, which some claim may provide the Germans with material for re-establishing the reputation of their army and its leaders, is a matter of controversy in which I do not propose to take part. I confess, however, that I cannot think that the book will do much harm. Hitler's responsibility for many of the German disasters, and the subservience of German generals to his monstrous orders, are well established. To show that one at least refused acquiescence, and fought with clean hands, merely accentuates the weakness and guilt of the others. Possibly Brigadier Young, influenced by the interest of his investigations, and by the assistance he received in making them, may have painted an unduly favourable picture of his subject; but it is clear that most of those who fought against Rommel, including Field Marshals Auchinleck and Wavell, are willing to accept the portrait. Like others, Rommel, for a time, was beguiled by Hitler's power of exercising charm, but he always hated the gang which surrounded the Führer. The S.S. who served with his army, though not under his command, he detested and constantly reported their misdeeds and lack of decent discipline.

If he had survived it is possible that he would have been a steady, rather than a disturbing, influence; and it is unlikely that he would have been brought to trial by the Allies. It is therefore of less importance to investigate his relations with the Hitler régime than to study his character and qualifications as a commander.

That he was a remarkable character and a leader of brilliance is obvious; but it is not easy to assess his status as a general, either from his achievement or in comparing him with other outstanding military figures. The conditions under which he fought were so dissimilar to those of the past, or which existed elsewhere. Undoubtedly at one

\**Rommel*, by Desmond Young. Collins. 12s. 6d.

time his reputation for invincibility was wildly exaggerated, not only by the general public the world over, but even by the troops which fought with a considerable measure of success against him. This exaggeration was due partly to the brilliance and unexpectedness of his actions and partly because the advantage he possessed in superiority of armament was not fully realized. When the situation was reversed, and superiority in weapon power passed to the other side, Rommel's defeat led to a belittling of his qualities. This was unfair to our generals who still had to deal with a formidable opponent, and was no more just than previous accusations of incompetence laid to their charge. We should now be in a position to form a more balanced judgment ; for Brigadier Young has had access to much of his history, and to the documentary evidence of his views and methods contained in his papers. The extracts, given in the appendices of the book, are very illuminating and should go far to re-establish Rommel's reputation.

We may still be unable to decide whether he was a great general of the highest class for he had little opportunity of showing strategic ability in the fullest sense, and he had a limited rôle. He had not to deal with the major strategic problems of the war but mainly responsible for executive action in a secondary theatre. Even there he was subject to orders from higher authority, though he sometimes ignored them.

That he was a great and inspiring leader of men and a master of both grand and minor tactics is undeniable. That he was capable of forming sound views on major strategic problems is however suggested by the importance he attached to the Middle East ; which he considered should be developed as a decisive theatre and not merely a subsidiary one, as it was treated by Hitler and his strategic advisers. Whether his conception or Von Rundstedt's as to the correct disposition of forces to resist the Allied invasion of France was right may be questionable. The compromise adopted was definitely wrong but we perhaps were fortunate that Rommel's argument did not prevail. If his qualifications as a strategist must remain unproven, in other respects he was a commander from whose methods and actions there is much to be learnt, even if they would be dangerous to accept as a model. Our other troops certainly learnt much from him in the course of their encounters.

Essentially Rommel was a fighting animal of unshakable courage and with highly developed instincts for daring offensive. He also possessed, and cultivated, great physical toughness and powers of endurance. It is curious how the anaemic and listless small boy should as a young man have suddenly developed these qualities. It is also curious that his schoolmaster father, after opposing his wish to become an engineer, should have allowed him to adopt a profession

which offered so few prospects as did the class dominated German Army. Nevertheless it was soon evident he had chosen well for he quickly became an efficient young officer capable of handling men. Then war came and in it he had opportunities of displaying the qualities which were to make him famous. In a number of cases he showed outstanding physical courage, initiative, an instinct for quick decision and a realization of what daring action could achieve.

By the end of the war he had only just reached the rank of captain, but he had earned the highest rewards open to junior officers and had gained much experience of command. He had presumably acquired confidence in his own judgment and instincts, yet it would seem that he did not become ambitious ; for in the inter-war period, having married in 1916, he settled down to domesticated life, content for most of the time to be employed in training duties. Naturally, with the expansion of the army, promotion came fairly quickly, but he did not seek, or qualify himself for, staff employment. The only event which seemed to promise special advancement was his selection to command Hitler's bodyguard battalion. This was none of his seeking but was due to Hitler's own choice based on his having read a treatise on tactics written by Rommel. This employment meant personal contact with Hitler ; and, to some extent, the two men were attracted by each other. Hitler could exercise charm and Rommel did not belong to the arrogant *Junker* class of officer which Hitler hated.

The war found Rommel still on bodyguard duties, and from Hitler's headquarters during the Polish campaign he had opportunities of studying tank warfare and air co-operation with ground troops, in which, although an infantry officer, he had already been interested by Von Seeckt's writings. Not unnaturally command of a Panzer Division became his ambition and, in 1940, when Hitler offered him active employment, that was what he asked for and received.

After a short period of training with it he soon had his Division well in hand, and during the invasion of France he fought it with notable success, and with the exceptional daring he had displayed as a subaltern. The only check he received was when, south of Arras, he met British troops for the first time. Incidentally it was here that British tanks first encountered the 88m. gun which was to serve Rommel so well later on. Before he left France Rommel again tested the quality of British troops ; for it was his Division that, after a gallant fight, received the surrender of the 51st Highland Division. It is pleasant to learn that General Fortune was courteously treated and that the two generals mutually respected each other.

This is a brief summary of the account given by Brigadier Young of Rommel's early history and background. It seems clear that Rommel's experiences in the 1914-1918 war remained the main

influence on his outlook unclouded by subsequent theoretical studies. It is rather strange that an officer with such a brilliant early career and who was attached to Hitler's headquarters, should have escaped the notice of military attachés and other observers ; yet, when Rommel's presence in Tripoli was known, the information supplied to Lord Wavell about him was meagre and valueless.

The idea of assisting Italy in Libya was canvassed even before Graziani's defeat but Hitler's advisers rejected it. Not till Bardia had fallen did Hitler insist on something being done to limit the exploitation of Wavell's victories.

In consequence Rommel received orders to proceed to Africa with instructions to help re-organize the Italians in Tripolitania and to defend that province. In February he arrived there, but not till March 21 did he receive orders to submit for consideration by April 20 a plan for the re-conquest of Cyrenaica ; even then he was not to go beyond Agedabia until reinforced by a heavy Panzer Division which was being despatched.

Disregarding the implications of these cautious instructions, on March 31 he struck at Field Marshal Wavell's desperately weakened army of the Nile. Characteristically he had achieved surprise by beating the starter's pistol. Field Marshal Wavell had reasonably calculated that no attack could start till April. Berlin equally was surprised on learning that, with the exception of Tobruk, the whole of Cyrenaica had been overrun before the date the plan for its re-conquest should have been due for "consideration". Thus began the long fluctuating struggle, the events of which must be too familiar to need recapitulation. Rommel found himself in a theatre ideally suited to his temperament and the methods he believed in. It lent itself to speed of manœuvre and to wide range of action and gave few facilities for stubborn defence of prepared positions. Unrestricted movement at speed, coupled with the development of wireless communication, admitted of personal control of widely scattered operations. Moreover the conditions were unprecedented and provided opportunities for the employment of daring unorthodox methods. Relying on his own instinctive judgment rather than the accepted theories his actions tended to achieve surprise by their unexpectedness. He was convinced that his tank force both from its power and mobility was the backbone of his army and other arms he treated as ancillary. Administration and supply considerations he did not neglect but he refused to allow them to dominate his plans. Risks of administrative difficulties he was prepared to take so long as complete breakdown, in particular of petrol supply, was avoided. In the confused fighting, bound to be brought about in operations conducted at speed over wide areas, he relied on personal intervention where rapid decisions were required and he ignored considerations of

his personal safety entirely. He relied greatly on the elusive characteristics of armoured forces when in difficulties, confident that their speed and weapon power would enable them to break through encircling forces in any direction. He was however orthodox in so far as he always aimed at disposing his main tank force so as to admit of rapid concentration. Rommel's ubiquity and his readiness to share all dangers with his troops made him a familiar figure to them, stimulated their morale and secured their devotion. He may not have deliberately aimed at achieving these results, as Field Marshal Montgomery undoubtedly did, but like the latter he believed in ensuring that every man knew what was required of him and its purpose.

There have been great generals who conducted warfare rather like a game of chess, relying on elaborate far-reaching plans. One even claimed that he could win a war without ever fighting a battle—but that was not Rommel's way ; nor was it applicable to desert warfare which developed, in its earlier phases at least, more like a game of Rugby football —a contest of swift movement and fluctuating fortune. Speed, instinctive recognition and exploitation of opportunities and adaptability to changing circumstances are the hallmarks of an outstanding player and in them Rommel excelled. His flair for arriving at the critical point at the right moment was almost uncanny and suggests instinct rather than deliberate thought. Great generals in the past have often been able to intervene and exercise personal influence, but they as a rule had the advantage of being able to watch the course of events in a comparatively restricted battle field. In modern battles covering wide areas, and with movement restricted by congestion of roads, personal intervention had become almost impracticable. To attempt it might even lead to complete loss of control; as on one occasion General Pershing found, when in attempting to take charge of a confused situation he got involved in a traffic block and was out of action for many hours. On two occasions Field Marshal Auchinleck did personally intervene by assuming executive command and gave decisions in the combat zone. That however was intervention of a different order to Rommel's intervention in localized situations.

So far we have considered the qualities that Rommel possessed which might justify a claim to greatness. Did he however show defects ? Stonewall Jackson, who in his reliance on speed and in his flair for adapting his manœuvres to the special nature of the theatre he operated in, suggests comparison with Rommel ; but he also relied on mystifying his opponents and on a close study of their character. Rommel on the other hand depended mainly on speed in the timing and delivery of the blow to introduce an element of surprise. He does not appear to have studied the character of his opponents, except in so far as he counted on the slowness of their reactions.

owing to their training and organization. There is evidence that he himself, rather than accept delay, was willing to act before his preparations were 100 per cent. complete.

In rapidly moving warfare no doubt superiority in speed was all-important ; but in carefully prepared encounters deliberate planning involving mental rather than instinctive processes tests the quality of commanders. That Rommel was mistaken as to his opponents' plans when Field Marshal Auchinleck launched his offensive in 1941, when forming his own plans for the attack at Gazala and on many occasions in his encounters with Field Marshal Montgomery indicates defects in his generalship. Field Marshal Auchinleck's demonstration towards Jalo deceived him. His own plan at Gazala, though simple enough in conception, proved complicated in practice ; in that the success of his main armoured turning movement depended on opening a way through General Ritchie's minefields, and the immediate capture of Bir Hacheim in order to shorten the supply line of his turning force. The temporary failure of these subsidiary operations almost involved Rommel in complete disaster since he had also failed to foresee the probable disposition of General Ritchie's armoured reserves. That he escaped was due to delay in developing a counter-attack. In his encounters with Field Marshal Montgomery, at Alam Halfa and at Medanine he fell into traps the latter had laid for him. He allowed himself in fact to be misled.

On the whole we can hardly rank Rommel as a great general ; but he was undoubtedly a magnificent fighting animal who relied on instinct rather than on intellectual process. Up to a point he was a highly trained animal though he relied more on his experience of fighting than on theoretical doctrines.

It may be admitted that his earlier successes in the desert were largely due to a superior weapon power, of which superiority he took full advantage. It should be realized however, that he, to a constantly increasing degree was inferior in air power, and that the Italian troops who formed the greater part of the infantry of his army were of indifferent quality and being unmechanized lacked mobility. These handicaps affected and limited the scope of his operations. That he received little support from higher authority should also be recognized. It is hardly fair to argue that Rommel was essentially a brilliant gambler. He himself defines the difference between daring operations, which involve severe losses in case of failure, but which allow of escape from complete disaster, and a gamble when the alternatives are victory or certain destruction. Under this definition a recognition of the elusive potentialities of a mechanized force justifies daring action where there is a worthwhile object.

## PLATO TO-DAY

BY W. R. INGE

THE appearance of a volume on Plato in the Home University Library by the very competent Professor G. C. Field of Bristol, may excuse an attempt by a humble disciple of the great Athenian to consider whether Plato has still something to say to us in the shattered world of 1950. For Plato can never be out of date. "Plato and Aristotle were the most influential of all philosophers, ancient, medieval, or modern, and of the two it was Plato who had the greater effect upon subsequent ages." (Bertrand Russell.) "Whenever, after a time of confusion and forgetfulness, our Western world has recaptured the sense of noble living, it has sought it afresh in the Platonic writings." "To few men does the world owe a heavier debt than to Plato." (A. E. Taylor.)

Professor Field\* goes even further. "The world has become much more like the Greek world of Plato's day than any previous period. The overthrow of democracies, the rise of tyrannies or dictatorships, the establishment of planned societies as ruthless and totalitarian as that of Sparta, these and similar things we have learnt to know as imminent possibilities or as active aspirations or as established realities. Plato's ideas come to us with a vividness and actuality which they could never have had forty or fifty years ago."

The parallel would have been closer if the modern Thirty Years War had ended in an Aegos Potami, in the defeat of the democracies. Would not our re-embodied Plato have reminded us of the bold prediction of the German publicist Sybel that universal suffrage would bring popular government to an end? Would he not have agreed with the older Plato that as every institution, when it has gained power, begins to undermine its own foundations, democracy has revealed its true nature as government by amateurs whose only training has been in demagogery, not in statesmanship, as mass-bribery and the pillage of the unrepresented minority? Did not Plato see clearly that the first requisite of decent government is that the power of the purse should not be in the hands of those who would use it to feather their own nests? Did he not, like his followers Aristotle, Cicero, Thomas Aquinas, Machiavelli, Burke and Lecky, tell us that a mixed constitution, with a proper balance between authority

\* *The Philosophy of Plato* by G. C. Field, Home University Library, Oxford University Press, 5s.

and liberty, is the best ? Did he not predict that in a State where all inequalities have been levelled down, there will be very little resistance to what he called tyranny ? We sometimes forget that Lenin, Mussolini and Hitler revolted against democracy. We are still afraid to say what we think about democracy. We have learnt to talk American, and in America to criticize democracy is blasphemy. But a Frenchman dared to say : "O the curious fetish ! I have seen it at too close quarters."

So Plato the Tory Socialist, who lived again in Carlyle and Ruskin, might have spoken. But the Plato who has lived is not the practical politician, but the prophet who is also a poet, the metaphysician who is also a mystic. We are a political people, and we have studied the *Republic* not quite in the right way. Plato is not concerned with social progress in our sense, and like Ruskin he hates the "swollen and inflamed State" of prosperous industrialism. He thinks of a society living under what the Stoics and Catholics called the Law of Nature, which in the *Laws* is modified to suit a society living "in a state of sin." It is an individual ideal, not a social Utopia ; he is thinking of a psychological and ethical, not a political problem. His social psychology, with its three castes, is inconsistent with the principle of unity on which he has insisted. His alleged Communism applies only to the ascetic aristocracy and their corps of Janissaries. His startling proposals as to the family may be compared with the thetorical words attributed in the Gospels to Christ, that His followers must "hate" their nearest relatives. It is complete non-attachment that he advocates. As for practical suggestions, the most desperate eugenist, says Urwick, has never suggested anything quite so ludicrous as a scheme by which the educated classes should be permanently hoodwinked—by themselves ! The type of Plato's *Republic* may be laid up in heaven ; he does not seriously expect to see it realized on earth.

Here a common misunderstanding may be rectified. Plato's philosopher, we are told, is not an 'escapist', sheltering from the storm under a wall. He returns to the 'cave' to work for the public good. But Plato says that he only returns to *rule*. And what likelihood is there that he will be invited to rule in such a State as Athens or Sparta ? Socrates says that if he had gone into politics he would have been put to death long before. No doubt members of the Academy were sometimes called in to suggest legislation ; but Plato's own experience in Sicily was not encouraging. Still, it is true that he cannot be accused of mere defeatism.

His methods of government are, we must confess, painfully totalitarian. Three classes of dissentients would go in danger of their lives. We should now call them atheists, Epicureans and Catholics. And yet his ideal State was more nearly realized by the

Church in the 'ages of faith' than at any other time. The authors of a successful revolution are always determined that their arrangements shall 'stay put'. After devouring their own children they are ready to liquidate all who might be tempted to follow their example.

What remains of Plato's politics is his conviction that the nation is the individual writ large, and that public and private morality must never be separated. I once said, to the extreme indignation of my Protestant friends, that Martin Luther, who taught that the Sermon on the Mount, and Christian ethics generally, relate only to our private conduct ("It is God who hangs and beheads men and breaks them on the wheel") was the spiritual ancestor of Adolf Hitler. We shall never achieve the perfect State; as Cicero says, we live in the dregs of Romulus, not in Plato's Republic. But "who aimeth at the sky shoots higher much than he who means a tree." And, as Christ taught us, reform must always begin from within, and work outwards.

Philosophy, for the ancients, meant not gnawing the dry bones of epistemology, but "the love of wisdom," or "the art of living." Plato is one of the founders of the *philosophia perennis*, which has outlived many new systems and will outlive the rest. Platonism captured the Christian Church, or was captured by it, from the very first. "Christianity, though Jewish in form, is Hellenic at bottom," says Havit; "a Graeco-Roman phenomenon in a Jewish mask," says Bruno Bauer. It inspired St. Paul (yes, decidedly St. Paul), the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Fourth Gospel, with the help of Philo's Platonized Judaism, Clement and Origen, the Cappadocian Fathers, one side of Augustine, the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, the Irishman John Scotus Erigena, Ficino, Colet, Erasmus, the Cambridge group in the seventeenth century, the poets Sidney, Spenser, Shelley, Wordsworth and Coleridge, the Oxford philosophers Green, Edward Caird and Bosanquet, and the Cambridge divines, Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort. Outside Christianity it was the creed of Plotinus and Proclus, and inspired the *Fons Vitae* of Ibn Gebirol. Platonism can never be torn out of Christian thought. The Eastern Orthodox Church, in the opinion of Berdyaeff and others, claims to be truer to Platonism than the West, which came under the influence of Aristotle, but it was an Aristotle interpreted by Platonists. Any list must include a large number of English names, for there seems to be a natural affinity between our nation and the Platonic tradition. There are personal Platonists, of whom Wordsworth is a supreme example, who have evolved a philosophy of the Platonic type for themselves. Anyone who has studied *The Prelude* knows what Platonism means. It is, says Professor Stewart, "the mood of one who has a curious eye for the endless variety of this visible and temporal world, and a fine sense of its own beauties, yet is haunted by the presence of an

invisible and eternal world behind, or, when the mood is most pressing, within the visible and temporal world, and sustaining both it and himself, a world inwardly lived by him."

The Platonist agrees with the Pauline psychology of body, soul and spirit. What St. Paul calls *Pneuma*, the Platonists call *Nous*, and though no English equivalent is satisfactory, perhaps 'Spirit' is the best for *Nous*. In Latin theology it is called *Intellectus*, which does not mean the logic-chopping faculty, but the whole personality acting under the guidance of its highest faculty. Platonism rests on an act of faith—that value and existence are ultimately one. Thomas Aquinas, as is well known, will not use the ontological argument for the existence of God. It had been wrongly stated long before Kant demolished a man of straw, but when Aquinas says *impossibile est naturale desiderium esse inane*, he accepts what the argument really means. In any philosophy we come to a point where a man must trust himself. It is not strictly impossible that our best moments should be in a conspiracy to deceive us, but it is, in Lotze's word, intolerable, and if we begin by resolving to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis, we shall find that experience justifies our choice ; in Clement's words, faith passes into knowledge.

There is an asceticism of the will and intellect, as well as of the body. Under this discipline the imagination, which Wordsworth calls reason in her most exalted mood, takes fire, and the passions are cold. The Platonist who is not something of an ascetic is a dilettante. The character and the intellect develop together and help each other. If we live as we ought, we shall see things as they are, and if we see things as they are we shall live as we ought.

"The perfectly real is perfectly knowable," says Plato. Not perfectly known, but perfectly knowable. There are absolute values, which are objectively real in their own right, and not means to anything else, or even to each other. These are known to us as ultimates. We may ask, more reverently than Pilate: "What is Truth ?" We may debate about right and wrong ; we may differ about beautiful objects. But in so far as we know what is true, we must believe it. In so far as we know what is right, we must do it. In so far as we know what is beautiful, we must admire it. These standards are objectively real ; they are not chosen by ourselves. The mystic is perfectly clear on this point. To know God is eternal life ; we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren. Plato does not, in his dialogues, speak of his most intimate spiritual experiences, as Plotinus does. It is probable that prayer for him was never what it is for the Christian saint. But in his *Letters*, the genuineness of which is now generally recognized, he explains that he has no intention of committing such things to writing. They can be known only by experience, and to describe them to those who have not experienced

them would, he thinks, do more harm than good. This deliberate reticence must not be forgotten in reading Plato.

The ultimate values are real, holy and immutable. The 'Soul become Spirit'—the Platonists allow of a 'birth into reality'—can know them and live by them. What then would Plato say to us to-day? He would warn us, with all the earnestness at his command, to flee from what he would call misology, hatred of reason. We have lived to see a revolt against intelligence—against reason as such—which I think is quite without parallel in history. William James congratulates Bergson for having killed "that beast" the intellect. Everything now is fluid and relative. There is no such thing as truth. A man may believe what he likes at his own risk. There is no such thing as right and wrong. We can make our own standards; Thrasymachus was not refuted by Socrates. There is no such thing as beauty. We have seen what this means in the state of our fine arts. A Christian who remembers the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit might be tempted to call this the unforgivable sin. It is at any rate the irreparable folly. There has been such a revival of savage cruelty and shameless lying as our grandfathers hoped that the world would never see again. *Pellitur e medio sapientia; vi geritur res.* And with this has come a recrudescence of superstition, which the science of the last century seemed to have banished for ever. Second sight, pre-cognition, astrology, and why not witchcraft? The sorcerer lies in wait for the sceptic. Those who believe nothing are ready to half-believe anything.

There are other parts of Plato's teaching which perhaps have no message for us to-day. His devotion to mathematics is well known. Some members of the Academy won repute as mathematicians, and we should like to believe—there is authority for it—that before the close of his life Plato himself anticipated Aristarchus, of whom we are told that "Cleanthes thought that the Greeks ought to prosecute Aristarchus for impiety, for altering the centre of the universe. For this man tried to account for the phenomena by the hypothesis that the heaven remains fixed, and that the earth revolves round (? the sun) in an oblique circle, at the same time rotating on its axis." But Aristotle complains of Plato's obsession with mathematics, and a marginal note, in a manuscript of Aristotle, if I remember right, says that Plato "mismathematized Nature". Pythagorean number mysticism does not concern us 'to-day'.

Mathematics is the clearest and emptiest of intellectual disciplines. As Meyerson shows, it eliminates time and change, and gives us only identity, a multitude of reversible processes in a world where nothing really happens. Plato had not to wrestle with the Second Law of Thermodynamics, but he will not go all the way with Parmenides. Besides mechanical causation there is another cause, Psyche, some

thing between 'Soul' and 'Life.' It looks as if in the still unsolved dispute between mechanism and vitalism, Plato would have sided with the vitalists. Some 'friends of the Forms', it seems, were unwilling to make this concession.

Professor Field does not mention another change which may make us more willing to listen to Plato. The revolt of Asia has led us to pay more respect to Indian thought, which is curiously like some important parts of Plato's philosophy. Plato was a disciple of Pythagoras, and the Indians claim Pythagoras as one of themselves. Was that his real name? No, they say. His affectionate pupils called him Pitta-guru, 'father teacher'. Samos still claims Pythagoras, but Urwick and Radhakrishnan leave us in no doubt that Plato would have sympathized with the Brahmins. The doctrine of the universal self, whom the Indians call *Atman*, is very much like the Platonic *Nous* and the Pauline *Pneuma*. The Indians criticize the Western restlessness and acquisitiveness just as Plato does with his dislike of the "inflamed city". We probably need not think of direct influence. A strange wave of spiritual religion broke over the old world about the middle of the first millennium before Christ. In China Confucius, in India Buddha, in Persia the diffusion of Zoroaster's teachings, in Palestine the later prophets, in Greece Orphism and Pythagoras. A historian might well say that this date is the most important in the whole development of the human mind. Religion has suffered both in Europe and Asia from the isolation of the two continents from each other. We have something to learn from India, and we may learn it through Plato.

The mention of India leads naturally to an important question. Many Indian thinkers seem only to desire deliverance from the conditions of earthly life, and to hope for a dreamless sleep on the shoreless ocean of Nirvana. But a journey through the unreal is an unreal journey; if earth is a phantasmagoria, the infinite is perilously like zero. Plato is generally supposed to have believed in a personal God and a personal immortality. The life of the Spirit, of *Nous*, is super-personal. And yet Plato probably believed, as Plotinus did, that distinctness, though not separation, is preserved 'yonder'. Some questions, which seem to us so important, were not asked in Plato's time. It is clear that the idea of a future life was not familiar to the interlocutors in the dialogues. Socrates believes in it as a great hope, but he does not speak of it with confidence, as a Christian might. As regards the personality of God, it is hardly correct to speak of the Deity as a Person. What we have a right to assert is that in the life of devotion the 'I and Thou' relation is never transcended. We do not pray to ourselves. We do not pray to a 'valid inference'. We do not pray to Jeans' supreme mathematician. 'X<sup>n</sup>, have mercy upon us.' Did Plato pray to God? He has not

told us, and we do not know. Nor does he tell us clearly what part of us survives death, but he is clear that whatever is exempt from death had no beginning in time. His eschatology is mythical, as all eschatology must be. We cannot get much beyond St. Augustine's *Quod Deo non perit sibi non perit*. Like all mystics he detested the coarse bribes and threats of popular religion. As his great successor was to say : "If a man desires the good life for any reason outside itself, it is not the good life that he desires." We win immortality by "imitating God as far as possible." The spiritual life is exalted above time and change.

There is only one more question which we need ask. It is acknowledged that in Plato the myths are an integral and important part of the teaching. But the mistake is often made of supposing that the myths are intended to convey a higher teaching than the dialectic. This is not so ; the myths rank below real knowledge. They deal with matters which are of interest to the soul, and the soul is amphibious, living partly in a world of sensible images, and partly in a world of eternal values. The myth in a sense bridges the gap. It tells a story which may be 'something like' the unknown truth. It is a method commonly used with children, and there is a large field for imagination and poetry in the region where we float between the things seen, which are temporary, and the things not seen which are eternal. It is interesting that Aristotle, from whom one would hardly expect it, says that the lover of myth is in his way a philosopher. Plato is well aware that there are problems which we cannot solve. In dealing with them we must be content with any raft which will bear us, in default of a divine revelation.

Myth is not the same as allegory or parable. In allegory the thought comes first and is depicted symbolically. A parable is an imaginary story illustrating a moral truth. In the Gospels, as I have said elsewhere, the sower is an allegory, the prodigal son a parable, the sheep and goats a myth. Myths tend to congeal or to evaporate ; either process is fatal to them.

I think there are three insoluble problems, in which we must be content with myth or symbol. The first is the status in reality of time and space. St. Augustine and Bishop Berkeley both owned themselves baffled. "What is Time ?" asks Augustine. "If no one asks me, I know, if I wish to explain it to another, I know not." Berkeley says: "If Time be taken exclusive of all those particular actions and ideas that diversify the day, merely for the continuation of existence or duration in abstract, then it will perhaps gravel even a philosopher to comprehend it." Our newest guides have arranged a gnostic marriage between time and space, which may or may not end in a divorce. I do not believe that anyone will ever stand on the edge of 'finite' space, with everything behind him and nothing in

front. "If Einstein thinks that nobody can jump off his sphere" said a profane American, "he can't know much about fleas." The myth of a local heaven dies hard, though Plato says : " It makes no difference whether we gaze stupidly at the sky or downwards at the ground. As long as we are observing sensible objects, our souls are looking downwards." Benjamin Whichcote says : " Heaven is first a temper, then a place." Even he dares not say that it is not a place. Of time, Windelband says : " It is difficult to say which idea is the more intolerable, that of an absolute rest or of a never-ending restlessness of the will "—Parmenides or Heracleitus. Time and space are only the warp and woof of the canvas on which we draw our imaginative pictures of the visible world. We cannot think them away, though we can think things away from them.

The second enigma is that of personality, of which I have said something. It may be enough to quote Hume. " On personal identity I find myself involved in such a labyrinth that I must confess I neither know how to correct my former opinions nor how to render them consistent. I cannot discover any theory which gives me satisfaction on that head. The matter is too hard for my understanding." A modest man need not be ashamed to agree with David Hume. It follows that all our theories about personality are mythical. Socrates would have said : " It depends on what you mean by personality. I do not know. What is the Greek for it ? " There is no Greek for it.

The third riddle is the problem of evil. There must be some answer, said the honest Dr. Johnson, but we do not know what it is. Plato will not help us much here. Plutarch, relying on one ambiguous phrase, thought that Plato believed in an evil world soul, a devil. He did not, but though *Nous* is impeccable, soul in this life is not. He did think that if we could rid ourselves of immersion in the flux of temporal phenomena, we might live sinless in the pure realm of spirit. Popularized Platonism has invested 'Matter' with positive evil properties. It was Persia that brought the devil into Judaism and so into Christianity. The moralist, so long as he is only a moralist, must be more than half a Manichean, for evil is certainly not only negative.

These unsolved problems are very troublesome to teachers of religion and ethics. Churches are secular institutions, in which the half-educated cater for the half-converted, and the language of faith is *unconscious* poetry or symbolism. We are opticians, who have to help people with every degree of myopia to see the invisible. Two sayings may help us, one by that very sound Platonist Paul of Tarsus : " Now we see as in a mirror, by symbols " ; and Goethe's: " Miracle is the dearest child of faith." The child, yes ; never the parent.

## DEBUSSY'S MUSIC

BY IRIS BIRTWISTLE

A N eclipsed sun abdicates  
in this kingdom of primeval forests,  
moon-bleached tree and flower  
candle the traveller  
through cathedral gloom  
to the sea's uneasy boundary :  
some require a man-friday footstep  
to leave the voluptuous bed.

Occasional birds  
alight on a mid-morning sill,  
cool courtyard  
chequered on beak and breast,  
promised wine  
mirrored in inquisitive grapes :  
before the sun-cupped feast begins  
inevitable jesters  
clap church-spire hands  
as shadow snakes  
dart from mellifluous temples  
in sudden tongues of doom.

This is no music of open casement  
and lasting sunlight  
the moon sails a sea of drowned men,  
always too far  
for a hand's span to acknowledge  
the clock-white face  
on a coral tower,  
the dancer caught in a wave's clasp  
entombed in an isle  
of soporific flowers.

*And always the fear  
of submerged singers,  
who bait their melancholy nets  
with the cold desire  
of disenchanted swans*

## ST. PATRICK'S CONEY ISLAND

BY OWEN TWEEDY

**T**HREE is Coney Island, New York. There is another Coney Island in the Thames Estuary. There are two more at least in Ireland—one in Lough Neagh and the other in Lough Corrib in Connemara. And, to go further afield, I once went a picnic to a Rabbit Island—which is the same thing—off the Egyptian coast within sight of Abukir Bay where in 1797 Nelson destroyed the French Fleet. And there may be many other Coney Islands : for rabbits are everywhere. But there is only one St. Patrick's Coney Island and it lies almost blocking the mouth of Sligo Bay at the base of the deep inlet in the north-west Irish coast between Donegal and Connemara.

The Island has a marvellous setting. All around on the mainland towers the superb panorama of the Sligo Mountains. Knocknarea which celebrates the immortal Queen Maeve is in the south. The northern bastion is mighty Benbulben with its battleship prow and long rock-ribbed back.

Under bare Benbulben's Head  
In Drumcliffe churchyard Yeats is laid.

To the west the Atlantic crashes unbroken from America up the great sweep of the lovely White Strand. And between its northern shore and Rosses Point on the mainland the tides race and tumble with positively blue fury as they ebb and flow past Dead Man's Rock and the Metal Man.

On Dead Man's Rock a foreign seaman who some hundred and fifty years ago died a victim to a plague, is alleged to be buried ; and there, tradition says, his bones may still be seen if you can find them—which you can't. But there is no missing the Metal Man. He stands on the Perch Rock which, jutting up right in mid-channel on the way to Sligo Port, had caused so many wrecks that in 1822 the Sligo Harbour Commissioners decided on the erection on it of a permanent monument on which was to be fixed the Metal Man "now lying"—so the official order stated—"on the New Quay." What he was originally made for, goodness knows. Anyhow the monument was built ; and he, weighing seven tons, was put on top ; and so pleased were the Commissioners with his appearance that they had him painted. They gave him a blue reefer coat, white close-fitting pants and shiny black boots ; and raven black hair, a complexion ruddy and wrinkled and dark staring eyes in which lurk all the wisdom and patience and

courage of those who go down to the sea in ships. He is a superb Nelsonian figure. And everyone loves him. For as the good wives of Coney Island and Rosses Point will tell you : " He doesn't talk. He doesn't carry tales. He doesn't fight. He just knows his job and keeps on doing it."

Coney Island itself is tiny—a mile and a half long and half a mile wide—and it is flat with small stone-walled cultivation in the north and in the centre a patch of bog-land and a minute but perfect heart-shaped bog-lake. In the south are the rabbits and the sandhills. And everywhere there are stones : and if these stones could speak they would tell the story of the island. For most of them have a story. Flints have been found in the rock caves on the north dating back to paleolithic times. There are three well-marked forts with fosses and tumuli which long ago were the islanders' defences. There are still rows of overgrown masoned stones in the fields overlooking the Atlantic to the west where the first organized settlers established their home and called it Pollnamadoo. Later the islanders moved inland for greater shelter and just below the highest of the three forts are the grass-covered traces of their new village called Shanbally. Lastly, perhaps three hundred years ago, there was yet another move—again for better shelter—and that is the village of to-day, a long straggling row of cottages, all too many of them now in ruins. And their stark walls and empty windows are more stones with more stories—stories of a population which has dwindled in the last 150 years from some 200 souls to the present six families, totalling 26 men, women and children.

But Coney Island looks back on a long history which in the "Golden Days of Ireland" was a great history. It is still an outpost of the parish of Killaspugbrone which centres round Knocknarea Mountain ; and Killaspugbrone's story goes back 15 centuries. The word means the church of Bishop Brone and there about the year A.D. 440 St. Patrick founded the first Christian church to be built in Sligo and consecrated Brone as the first bishop of the diocese. The story has come down to us in the eleventh century Irish manuscript, the *Tripartite Life of Patrick*. "Patrick", so runs the narrative, "marked out Caissel Irre (the original name of Killaspugbrone) and in the middle of the Hall stands the flagstone on which Patrick's tooth fell.... and Patrick prophesied that the place would be deserted by the heathen, which came to pass." Another local legend on more intimate lines is also recorded in the *Life*. One day the Saint wanted some fish to eat. The local fisherman demurred that there were never any salmon in the Sligo River in winter ; but to humour the old man they said they would have a try. To their surprise they made a grand haul, and St. Patrick was so delighted that "he blessed the Sligo River so that it is the milch cow of the waters of

Ireland, for in it fish are caught in every quarter of the year." And it is a fact that to-day salmon fishing on the Sligo River opens on the exceptionally early date of January 1 and I am told that it is still the traditional practice of the river that the first salmon of the season is always sent to the Bishop of Elphin. Killaspugbrone Church, too, still survives in the sandhills facing Coney Island across a narrow arm of the sea. To-day it is in ruins ; but the stone on which the Saint dropped his tooth is still a venerated object of pilgrimage.

Coney Island itself, was also visited while the Saint was making his way from Connemara and Cloagh Patrick to the north ; and vivid legends survive of his stay. There is a delicious St. Patrick's Well where he planted his staff among the green sandhills in the south ; and in the north, in a windswept field above the Atlantic, is his "wishing stone". It is a huge grey boulder with ledges like so many steps ; and the story goes that the Saint himself cast it down where it is. The marks left by his fingers are still pointed out and around the stone have grown up stories of miraculous cures and miraculously fulfilled wishes and even to-day anyone can and everyone does go and sit on one of the ledges and make a wish once a year. Last summer I made a wish there: and my story has a most convincing ending. One afternoon I was wandering about the fields and rocks photographing and I lost my wallet. I hadn't a clue where I had dropped it and I was trudging this way and that searching when, in the grey twilight, my steps led me by St. Patrick's Stone and I bethought me of its powers and sat down and solemnly wished. Two nights later an Islander friend knocked on my cottage door. He and his wife and his family had heard of my loss and, with a prayer to Saint Anthony, had set out that evening to search. They had found it not fifty yards away from the wishing stone.

But the great legend of St. Patrick on the Island is the story of the widow Mulclohy and the cat. The Island has one very curious feature. Beyond it to the south the Cumeen Strand stretches across to the mainland. The Strand goes dry at low tide so that twice a day for short periods the Island is not an island at all and the islanders can cross—more or less dry shod on foot—to the mainland under Knocknarea. But St. Patrick, like the youth of to-day, chafed against this isolation on the Island except at very low tide ; and so decided to build a permanent causeway across the strand. And according to a less credible legend, for his project he enlisted the help of some local giants who could move seven tons of stone in one shift! However that may be, one day the Saint sent back word to the widow Mulclohy, his hostess on the Island, asking her to prepare a rabbit for his dinner. But the widow was mean or lazy or both ; and instead cooked him a well-grown cat which she served up under a large cover.

Before sitting down, St. Patrick called a blessing on his food : and then, to his horror, up rose the cover and from under it, alive and spitting, leapt the cat. The Saint was furious and declared that he was leaving the Island for good and ordered the suspension of all work on the causeway. And to-day only one trace of its short existence still survives. Perhaps half a mile from the Coney Island shore, there erupts in the middle of the flatness of the sand all round it, an odd grass-grown knoll with a stony core and irregular-shaped rocks strewn round its base. It is called Doonanpatrick and tradition has it that the Saint ordered its survival as a permanent reminder to the Island of the widow's treachery. Then on the Mulclohy family he poured out the full vials of his wrath. Never, he said, would there be four of the family together in one place to carry a Mulclohy corpse to its grave. And though the Island is still marked on the Irish ordnance maps as "Mulclohy's Island", the family itself has died out altogether.

Since the days of St. Patrick the history of the Island has been less dramatically documented. But there are other tales—tales told round the turf fires at night of ghosts and mermaids, of fairies—the "little people"—and of devils. And they lack nothing in the telling. How one All Hallowe'en night when every decent man should be in his home, three of the islanders went fishing in a dead calm off the Long Rocks. And at midnight suddenly the silence of the darkness was broken by sounds—the clang of iron-shod hooves striking on the rocks : the crack of a whip : and the loud whirr of a reaping machine harvesting—of all places—on the dangerous seaweed-covered rocks. The three fishermen turned in panic for the shore ; and before they got there didn't the mother of a storm catch them in the breakers and capsize their boat and all the fish they had caught, and the fellows themselves were near drowned ? It was the "little people getting back on them for working on All Hallowe'en. And another evening a fellow shot a rabbit in a graveyard and didn't the devil chase him two good miles to his home ? And those mysterious lights seen by night along the shore and in the deserted cottages and, of course, in the three forts where everyone knows the little people live and work !

These tales will never die. But the memories of real history are now very faint—of the ebb and flow of Irish tribal wars after the day of St. Patrick ; of the Elizabethan silver mine which a traveller recorded was still working in 1556 "on a little desert island called Coney Island in the very harbour mouth of Sligo" ; and of the Armada galleon wrecked on the cliffs to the north in 1588.

Then comes Coney Island's first link with the Western Hemisphere and America. It is fully documented. In 1655 Oliver Cromwell received a petition from a party of New England emigrants asking him

to arrange for their return to his now Puritanized England. The outcome was that the Protector ordered that "Sligo town-lands on the mile-line together with two little islands called Coney Island and Oyster Island should be leased for one year for the use of such English families as should come from New England in America." Incidentally none ever came. The Island's second link with the States is the traditional story of how America's Coney Island got its name. Here it is. Some two hundred years ago an old schooner, *The Arethusa*, used to ply between Sligo and America. In those days, according to the Sligo tale, the American Coney Island, lying just offshore and swarming with rabbits, was unnamed, and the schooner's master Captain Peter O'Connor of Rosses Point, near Sligo, paid it the compliment of baptising it after his own very similar Coney Island far away back off Ireland. *Si non e vero, e ben trovato.*

But other tales of long-ago days and of less reputable character are still very vivid. Under the cliffs to the north is a dark cave called "Tobacco Hole" which looks exactly what its name implies. And there are carefully sited "look-outs" where the islanders awaited the arrival of contraband. And one of the best fireside stories is of the disastrous night in 1828 when after the police had caught a smuggler's racing clipper redhanded just outside the Black Rock, there was a horribly thorough round-up of accessories to the act among the islanders—innocent and guilty. The other disreputable topic concerns illicit stills and poteen. It is rarely discussed except to refute the "wicked" libels spread by the police and the Customs that those mysterious fairy lights were not at all as innocent as the good folk of the island might lead the gullible and romantic visitor to believe with their stories of the "little people" and all that.

But the last century has been hard on Coney Island—as on all Ireland. The cholera epidemic of 1833 took its toll; then came the "hungry forties" with the climax of the terrible potato famine of 1845. And then started an exodus partly to the mainland but mainly to the States so that to-day every family in the island has an American branch. And, with the march of time, this exodus continued relentlessly. For isolation from the mainland has slowly driven Coney Island off the map of Ireland. Gone are the days when 60 and 80 "boys and girls" from the mainland would come over for a night's dancing in the cottages or on the springy island turf. Gone the card-playing and the singing and—almost—the story-telling of winter nights round the open turf fires. For to-day youth wants other things and can get them in the dance halls which have been built at Rosses Point and Strandhill nearby on the mainland. And Sligo and its cinemas are only 20 minutes further by bus. So the old have died in their cottages; and with brides flinching at the pros-

pect of the remoteness and dullness and austerity of the Island, youth has spread wings and has made twentieth-century homes on the modernized mainland. To-day the village school where they learnt their lessons is derelict and closed and every other cottage is in ruins. Time marches on.

Indeed everything on Coney Island seems to hark back to the past. And I, too, when I arrived there last summer, was full of my family past. For in 1784 my great-great-great-grandfather, George Doran, first acquired the island and in 1788, his daughter, Olivia, brought it with her as her dowry to my great-great-grandfather, Tom Meredith of Cloonamahon. He is still a figure among us, his great-great-grandchildren. We know what he looked like from his miniature—a well-filled pugnacious profile with a short, neat pigtail of hair hanging down over his ruffed coat. We used to be told of the gay painted panels and the red wheels of his coach of office when he was High Sheriff of the County in 1799. And my mother remembered a long loose flower-embroidered silk waistcoat of his which she and her cousins used to don when they were playing charades 70 and 80 years ago. Then, stepping down the generations I come to my Meredith grandparents. I still have the islanders' address of welcome when they first visited the island together after their marriage in 1854. The "Famine" was just over and this is what the tenants said : "Our greeting is a token of our remembrance of your fostering care during the past years of famine and distress, through which (by the protection of God) we have been preserved, we trust, to a continued residence on the island under a member of a family whose motto has been and we ever trust will be 'To Live and let live'."

To-day the children and grandchildren of the signatories of that address of 96 years ago—there are only 26 of them, men, women and children—own their own farms ; for 50 years ago my father sold to the Irish Land Commission and the Island ceased to be Meredith property. The cottage which I rented was the last of the straggling row where most of the island population live. There is shelter from the Atlantic storms under the low hill where most of the farming is done ; and past my door ran both the island roads. They were built in the Famine days ; and both are to-day grass-grown. One skirts the shore from north to south ; the other branches off it across to the Atlantic. And just above the lovely sweep of the White Strand in a fold of the green hillside cluster three white thatched cottages where for centuries the Carty family has lived. And this tiny settlement—greatly to the pride of the Cartys—rejoices in the proprietary postal address of "Carty's Town, Coney Island."

Life on the Island is simple. There are no police. Nor any telephones. Nor any shops. Nor any litter. Clocks do not chime ; and the life and work is by the sun and nature says when it is time to

eat again. Nor are there any motors ; and the only traffic is the occasional rumble past my window of one of the six carts on the Island drawn by one of the eight horses or the one donkey ; or perhaps, on a sunny day, there will be the distant whirr of a mowing machine in one of the little fields over the hill.

Mine was a happy and intimate existence. I worked a bit ; I sketched a bit ; and I walked a lot and talked a lot. And they were lovely walks and lovely talks. The walks because everything on the Island is bracing and intriguing. The talks because the Island likes talking and knows how to talk. And I have learnt and seen a lot. How the thatch on the roofs is repaired after the winter storms. How and where to lay the lobster-pots off the long Rocks. How rabbits are snared for the winter markets and how new stock is imported from the Sligo mountains to keep the Island strain going. How the cattle are driven at low tide to the Sligo market across the Cumeen Strand. How the lighthouse on the Black Rock is refuelled every ten days. The departure of the post-boat every morning to Rosses Point. The potato digging and the haymaking and harvesting in the tiny stone-walled fields. The drinking water which comes from the Island's only pump. The birds and animals to be fed—the calves, the turkeys, the hens, the geese and the ducks. And with the fall of the night may be a friend would drop into the cottage for a yarn over the turf fire and we might listen in to the news on my radio which was the only one on the Island. And so one perfect day after another would end with bed by candlelight and the music of the Atlantic rollers in my ears from away over the hill.

Often on the Island I had the same feeling as I have had when looking up at the pyramids—a feeling that I was in touch with something very old, very wise and very human : something that has seen a lot and suffered a lot and learnt a lot. When I was leaving last September, one of my older friends bade me goodbye. "We'll be here when you come back," he said. "And the Island will be here too for you. And we'll talk again of the days I mind well when I was a boy and when we'd all be dancing and singing and playing up at old Maguire's." He pointed sadly to the ruin of a grey stone cottage half swallowed in the green of the hillside. There was a pause and then he added : "Islands like ours are out of date in these queer times."

# THE FORTNIGHTLY LIBRARY

## EARLY ENGLISH DRAMA

By F. S. BOAS

STUDENTS of English Drama who have benefited from Mr. A. P. Rossiter's edition of the MS play *Woodstock* will be prepared to welcome his *English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans*\*. This in itself is a wide stretch to cover but the book embraces even more than its title implies. Its purpose, as Mr. Rossiter explains in his prologue, is to give direction in looking for the "cultural continuities" which exist within and behind the stage "by following the metamorphoses of certain themes in different kinds of drama" from the earliest times to the advent of the major Elizabethans. Hence he not only, in accordance with a prevailing tendency of critical scholarship refuses to draw a line between medieval and Renaissance literary and theatrical aspects. He lays stress on the fact that in all periods a dramatist has to comply with the "habitual expectations of the audience: its accepted forms of illusion, of sentiment, or of humour."

This is well said but it may be thought that in the earlier interesting chapters of a book necessarily limited in size it leads Mr. Rossiter somewhat too far afield from the subject of English drama, even its background—from the primitive ritual of song and dance (for example, behind Chinese drama of 2000 B.C.) he proceeds to the development of tragedy among the Greeks from the death and resurrection of the fertility god. It was not however the masterpieces of Greek drama, but the "primitive underlay" of dance, mask and pantomime that passed to Rome where they had their counterpart in the *spectacula* of the amphitheatre, and in the "revelling and levelling" of the Saturnalia and the Kalends. Against these the Church thundered, but pagan

ritual survived, and often transformed and disguised, found its way into the festival ceremonies of the Church.

And though it was from the liturgical ritual within the Church itself that medieval drama developed step by step into the great miracle cycles, the folklore element still persisted. In Mr. Rossiter's epigrammatic summary: "The drama of the Church set out to christianize humanity; the miracle plays humanized Christianity. Sometimes they bedevilled it." Nothing in his book is more illuminating than his exposition of these discordant features in medieval Gothic drama. On the one hand there is the majestic design, "controlled by a logic which was theologic" and, in Mr. Rossiter's view, not of popular but of clerical origin. To the chain of episodes from Adam to the Last Judgement "add the end of the world to the one end, and start with the creation at the other and the whole magnificent conception is complete: a vast cosmic drama of 'man's first disobedience and the fruit' beside which *War and Peace* almost seems small and Milton himself parochial." On the other hand there are the popular elements in the episodes, farcically humorous with Noah's wife and with Mak in the *Wakefield Secunda Pastorum*, melodramatic with raging Herod, brutal with the *Buffeting* and *Crucifixion*. In this connection no one should overlook the frontispiece to the book, Grünewald's *Christ Mocked*, with Mr. Rossiter's descriptive note on it. His comparisons with painting and architecture are consistently helpful.

— Thus in passing from the miracle plays to the moralities he takes in illustration Holbein's *Dance of Death* where a number of human figures from Pope and Emperor to merchant and

\**English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans*, by A. P. Rossiter. Hutchinson University Library. 16s.

*Elizabethans*, by A. P. Rossiter. Hutchinson

beggar are approached by a skeleton. Mr. Rossiter's contention, in opposition to a current view, is that this "morality habit-of-mind" continued into the Elizabethan age. If some of the figures in the *Morality* were, like the skeleton, merely allegoric, others, like the human persons in *The Dance of Death*, existed on two planes. They were allegorically exemplars of mankind, but they were also in dress and other characteristics types of contemporary life. It was this latter feature, together with the attraction of a not pre-determined plot, that helped to popularize the *Morality* and that links it with the *Interlude*. Of the longer *Moralities* which cover the life of man from the cradle to the grave *The Castle of Perseverance*, with its four 'sequences' is taken as the chief example, and in it Mr. Rossiter finds "a potential frame for a life-story: not of mankind as *Humanum Genus*, but the human kind as revealed in one Man." The shorter pieces, like *Hickscorner* or *Lusty Juventus*, dealing with one 'sequence', could be more easily staged, and one of them, *The Contention of Liberality and Prodigality*, was acted at court in 1600. But need Mr. Rossiter for that reason have interjected an unmerited taunt against Queen Elizabeth, "that much flattered woman," who was an unwearied listener to more 'high-brow' plays in Latin as well as in English? Not so her father who departed to his chamber before the end of Henry Medwall's lost *Morality The Finding of Truth*.

Medwall, author of another *Morality*, *Nature*, and of our first non-allegorical play, *Fulgens* and *Lucrece* (which might have been more fully treated), is the only cleric, as Mr. Rossiter points out, among the group including John Rastell, John Redford and John Heywood, who gave the *Interlude* an educational rather than a morally didactic trend. Heywood, with his skilfully drawn types, partly under French influence, stands somewhat alone before the impact of classical influences, and also apart from the politico-religious dramatic con-

troversy dealt with in the chapter on "Interlude of Church and State."

Here with Skelton's *Magnysycence*, apparently aimed against Wolsey, Lindsay's *Ane Plesant Satyre of the three Estaitis, Respublica* from the Catholic side, Bale's *Kynge Johan* is the leading case. Bale's specific importance, as Mr. Rossiter puts it, is that "he extended the *Morality*-pattern to treat one (ostensibly) real-life story; and not in terms of the psychomachic conflict but of order and disorder within the State... Bale had pointed to the vast treasure-house of human experience in history."

From this point of view *Kynge Johan* is a predecessor of *Gorboduc*, where in a neo-Senecan framework, Sackville and Norton made use of legendary, but to them factual, British annals to point the moral of the evils of a disputed succession to the throne. Mr. Rossiter does more justice on the whole to the classical influence on Tudor tragedy than on comedy. He speaks of *Ralph Roister Doister* as acted by Eton boys, though the latest evidence points to the time when Udall was 'schoolmaster' to Bishop Gardiner. And he accepts, what is very doubtful, William Stevenson as author of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. He rightly emphasizes the importance of Gascoigne's innovation in using prose for the dialogue in *Supposes* but says little about its development by Lyl in his court-comedies. He even asserts that "right comedy" comes into existence only in Shakespeare's lifetime, in the 1590's.

He finds the true line of development between the early Tudor stage and the Elizabethan in what Sidney termed 'mungrell trag-comedie,' of which Edwards's *Damon and Pithias*, Pickeryng's *Horestes*, Preston's *Cambises* and Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* are notable examples. They prepared the way, and with the virtually simultaneous advent of Kyd and Marlowe about 1588 the shape of Elizabethan drama was finally deter-

mined. And as an editor of Kyd I owe to Mr. Rossiter a remarkable surprise. It had never occurred to me that when Shakespeare made Titania salute Bottom :

What angel wakes me from my flowery bed ?

he counted on his audience calling to mind Hieronimo's outburst before discovering his murdered son's body :

What enterics pluck me from my naked bed ?

I must add this debt to the interest I have derived from this scholarly, challenging, sometimes provocative, but always stimulating volume.

**EUROPE UNITE : Speeches 1947 and 1948**, by Winston S. Churchill. Cassell. 18s.

This is the tenth volume of Mr. Churchill's speeches. There can hardly be any precedent for so great a public appetite for reading the past utterances of a political figure. Most such speeches lie buried and forgotten in the columns of *Hansard* or in the dead files of newspapers, but Mr. Churchill's speeches have a historical quality, which makes people anxious to possess them as a record of the glories and the tragedies of their time. This volume, though very different from the volumes covering the war years, will hardly be less valuable as a commentary on current events.

For the most part these speeches are party speeches uttered in the House of Commons or at Conservative gatherings. They range over the whole field of foreign and domestic affairs. At times they touch peaks of thought and eloquence in dealing with the themes of liberty and security in the post-war world, at others they are full of the thrust and parry of debate on homely matters such as the nationalization of steel or the suppression of the university seats. But there are other occasions when the speaker throws off his party-robés and again dons the cloak of the prophet or of the world-statesman, as in his address to the Congress of Europe at the Hague or at the Pilgrim's Dinner to Mrs. Roosevelt. At moments

he gives free play to his fancy in proposing medical saints' days "when we can fête good St. Anaesthesia and pure and chaste Saint Antiseptic." No reader need fear boredom from lack of wit or variety, nor, when he has finished, will have any doubt as to who is the leader of His Majesty's Opposition.

But through all these fifty-two speeches there runs a reverberating note of warning and fear of the future, comparable to the sense of approaching danger which ran through *Arms and the Covenant*. It is not merely that Mr. Churchill deplores the decline of the power and influence of Britain in the world, or the disappearance of the British Raj in India and Burma, or the signs of our impoverishment evident in the multiple restrictions on our daily lives and the debasement of our currency. For all these things he holds the Labour Government responsible, though none of them could have been wholly avoided by any government. But his apprehensions reach deeper than that. He believes that we cannot restore our own fortunes without taking a vigorous lead in rebuilding Europe.

He believes too that we must combine closer association with Europe with stronger ties with the Commonwealth and more intimate understanding with the United States. But our standing in the world depends ultimately on our own innate strength and resolution. Can it be restored while the country is being divided against itself by class warfare? Can we recover anything like our old prosperity at home or our reputation for solvency and stability abroad without giving full rein to the enterprise and ingenuity, upon which they rested in the past? Can we maintain the living standards of the fifty million people in these over-crowded, over-industrialized islands by trying to maintain a State-planned economy in a world governed by commercial competition? Mr. Churchill believes not. Without a new spirit and a new method he sees our future darkly as he saw it in the 'thirties. Though he was right then, he may not be

right now, but even those who repel his apprehensions most confidently, may sometimes feel the prick of an uncomfortable query at the back of their minds as they read some of the speeches. Stripped of their partisan trappings, they pose the problems of our national existence too clearly for anyone to doubt their gravity or their urgency.

HAROLD BUTLER.

**SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS**, by Eric Estoric. *Heinemann*. 21s.

This is an excellent book about a remarkable man, comprehensive in its scope and sympathetic in its interpretation. The author, an American, has striven, successfully, I think, to present an interpretation of his subject in the light of the family history of the Crippses, their traditions as a 'public service family' and their rôle in the exciting period in which Sir Stafford Cripps has made his impact on human affairs. He says :

When Charles Alfred Cripps married Theresa Potter (the parents of Sir Stafford) in 1881, a son of the ancient English squirearchy wedded a daughter of the manufacturing and merchant class of England which rose to power and affluence in the age of Queen Victoria.

These families whose background he describes most effectively were religious, conservative and well-to-do. It would appear from the data provided in this book that two women and two men have exercised a deterministic influence on Sir Stafford—his mother and his wife, his father and Bishop Burge, all religious people.

His mother thought, when he was a year old, that he would prove to be the genius of the family. Unfortunately she died when Stafford was four years of age. She left a remarkable testament in which she implored her children to "choose Christ as their sole Hero and Master." Her death made that document a sacred thing to the boy. His father, Lord Parmoor, sought to make up for the absent mother in the life of his youngest son by devoted attention and the nurturing of him in the spirit of his wife's testament. What

the parents began Dr. Burge continued both at Winchester and after, finally steering him, as a young man, into the leadership of the "British Council of the World Alliance to promote international friendship through the Churches." Isobel Swithinbank had been reared in the same kind of environment and brought to their marriage the same kind of outlook that he had derived from his own family unbringing.

Through all ran the ethical values of the squirearchical Christian. He became the youngest scientist to read a paper to the British Association, a leading lawyer and layman of the Church, and a statesman of renown. He has been an ambassador, headed imperial missions and travelled the world. The story of all this is exciting and well told.

But I think the author's emphasis on the part played by Christian ethics in deciding Sir Stafford's political gyrations is a little over-done. May it not be that his leap from left to right was determined more by the exigencies of his career as marked out for him by his family tradition, than his ethical or patriotic considerations? His expulsion from the Labour Party in 1939 isolated him. He became a general without an army. There was no future for him as a leader of the left in the age when parties have become increasingly organizations of ideologies. But there was a future for him on the right; so right he went. After all Christian ethics are accepted by both left and right, the pacifists and the atomic bombers. Patriotism can hardly be the key to his changes for it is not limited to left or right. That he has changed profoundly none can deny. And there is much irony in the fact that the crisis of 1931 transformed Sir Stafford from a skilful exponent of Macdonald-Parmoor-Fabian gradualism into a "class struggle" politician, and the crisis of 1939-1945 re-transformed him and placed him once more on the high-road that his father had trod before him.

Nevertheless his career is outstanding

and this account of it will hold the field for a long time to come.

J. T. MURPHY.

**THE NOBLE DUKE OF YORK**, by

Alfred H. Burne. *Staples Press.*  
25s.

**HENRY IRETON**, by Robert W. Ramsey. *Longmans*. 15s.

**FROM EMPIRE TO COMMONWEALTH**, by Jack Simmons. *Odhams Press*. 12s. 6d.

**FOUR STUART PORTRAITS**, by Hugh Ross Williamson. *Evans Brothers*. 10s. 6d.

Of the books here reviewed, that by Colonel Burne is the most important. The view established by Fortescue is that George III's second and favourite son was a mediocre general but an admirable administrator. While detracting nothing from his work at the Horse Guards, which he summarizes, the author asks, pertinently, whether the Duke was such a bad general after all. And he shows not merely that the Duke was competent but that, in fact, no real criticism of his campaigns has ever been attempted. The Duke's defender has nothing to answer but vague generalities and gossip. So Colonel Burne devotes six valuable chapters to an analysis of the campaigns of 1793-1794 and shows that the Duke of York showed great professional knowledge, tactical skill and leadership. Using new material, especially from the Windsor Archives, he presents a good case for the defence. More work is needed, perhaps, on the Helder Campaign; and on the Mrs. Clarke scandal a more detailed investigation might throw more light—although without, very likely, modifying Colonel Burne's conclusion. The maps in this book are unworthy of the text but the production is otherwise admirable. The author has done well to reverse the common belief about this soldier to whom the army owes so much.

If a biography of the Duke of York was overdue, the same might be said of Henry Ireton. But Mr. Ramsey, in

following a suggestion made by Sir Charles Firth, was attempting the impossible. Ireton was important enough but the materials for his life simply do not exist. The result is that the greater part of this book is not about Ireton at all. If there are manuscript sources, the author has not found them and his hero remains a mere shadow to the end. As a result we have here a painstaking narrative of the events in which Ireton figured but lacking any assessment of him as man or soldier. The fact is that Ireton is only to be understood as a member of the Cromwell group. Cromwell's own personality, about which a great deal is known, is viewed very differently by his several biographers. And one's judgment on Ireton must depend, in effect, on the opinion one has formed of Cromwell. Ireton was either the follower of a saintly patriot or one of the gunmen kept by a plutocratic gangster. Mr. Ramsey ignores this dilemma, assumes (without defining) his own estimate of Cromwell and tries to turn his spotlight on a blurred figure in the background. Ireton remains obstinately obscure and the book exemplifies the danger of undertaking what is wanted without reference to what is feasible.

If Mr. Ramsey attempts the impossible, that cannot be said of Professor Simmons. The task of compiling a political anthology "designed to illustrate some principles of modern British imperial government" seems, if anything, a little too easy. This anthology, with a first item dating from 1496, comprises excerpts from Hakluyt, Burke, Macaulay, Durham, Elgin, Grey and Milner and ends with extracts from the Statute of Westminster, the Indian Independence Act of 1947 and the statement of 1949 explaining India's continued membership of the Commonwealth. The collection includes virtually no unpublished material and much of it will be familiar to the student. In thus aiming to reach the general reader the anthologist comes nearer, perhaps, to catering for the

sixth form or the extra-mural class. Such a book one might suppose invaluable to an extension class in colonial history or current affairs. It offers, in convenient form, a guide to the steps by which the British Commonwealth came into being. On the other hand, the choice of material, deliberately favourable as it must be, seems also somewhat capricious. It is not clear why Ireland should be omitted, and the jump in time from 1619 to 1660 and thence in a bound to 1759 does scant justice to the formative years between.

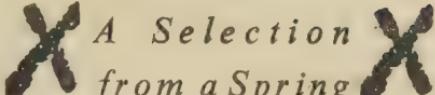
One who would certainly deplore this allocation of space is Mr. Hugh Ross Williamson, for whom all history probably ends in 1661. As an author and scholar he is immensely more skilled than the authors of the other works under review. His Stuart portraits—of Sir Balthazar Gerbier Lancelot Andrewes, Sir John Eliot and Colonel Thomas Rainsborough—are exquisitely done. All his characters live and he moves easily among them, at once familiar with their background and yet acutely aware of that ignorance which we cannot avoid. And, better still, he has a style. These portraits are but the by-product, however, of a scholar's work. Gerbier is introduced mostly for amusement and the essays on Eliot and Andrewes are thoughtful re-assessments of characters well known. Of most historical value, possibly, is the essay on Rainsborough. But here one is left puzzled by the manner of his death. Could not the historical detective go over the ground for further clues? Has every witness been questioned? Is Cromwell's alibi complete?

C. NORTHCOTE PARKINSON

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to the English king who was more at home in that region than in his own realm. And Mr. Pine's lion-heart did not waver, so that one is inclined to speak of him with the same respect as in the pages of the Old Testament the Persians are alluded to, the sole foreign rulers of Israel to be thus honoured, perhaps because they approximated to monotheism, being fire worshippers. That is one of the numerous interesting points in this book ; we can here only pick up a few crumbs from the banquet, such as the fact that when Alexander the Great attacked and destroyed Thebes he caused the house of the poet Pindar to be left intact, and after his triumphant return from Asia he placed at the disposal of his old master Aristotle the financial means for research and a body of a thousand men who should carry out Aristotle's orders for procuring specimens and curiosities. Aristotle was less of a literary artist than Plato, but I doubt whether he would have approved of Mr. Pine's occasional indulgence in what one may call unbuttoned English, such as the statement that "all Southern India is chock-full with temples," while the unsatisfactory condition of Italian lavatories might have been omitted in favour of some account of the heroic Republic of Ragusa.

The whole Adriatic is ignored, save for a line to mention that Mussolini invaded Albania in 1938. On the other hand it will be news to many of his readers that Julius Caesar, after he had been ransomed from a band of pirates, fitted out an expedition against them, captured them and had them crucified. He might have alluded to the subsequent Barbary pirates and the Redemption Fund with which the Knights of St. John in Malta recovered the Knights (for a large amount) and the galley-slaves (for much smaller sums) who fell into their hands. This Fund still exists, but of course is now diverted to other uses. And Mr. Pine appears to think that the armies of the various Arab countries could be more gloriously

employed in other fields than those of battle.

Mr. Kininmonth's canvas is less vast ; after having served during the war in Greece and fallen in love with that country, he returned in more peaceful times and visited a number of islands. It is a pity that no map is included in this otherwise well illustrated book. The author tells us that the island of Poros nestles in an angle of the Argolid coast and it would have been agreeable to see that on a map ; however we are introduced to one of the many memorable personages whom Mr. Kininmonth was fortunate enough to meet.

Thin and lugubrious, the owner of a grocery shop, Mr. Frangoulis declared that he ought to know about nereids, seeing that his own grandmother was one. She had been caught when his grandfather stole her scarf as she was bathing ; but many years later she recovered it, when her husband at a wedding happened to be drunk, so that she ran off through the air and was never seen again. Several very diverting pages are devoted to another inebriate, this time a woman in the island of Aegina, who was obeying the Government's decision that citizens should no longer live in sin. The scene at the wedding ceremony would have appealed to Hogarth, particularly as the lady's daughter was a glutton for respectability.

It will be seen that Mr. Kininmonth became quite intimate with the islanders and it may indeed be said that he takes the reader on a spiritual as well as a terrestrial journey. He read the *Odyssey* for the first time in Ithaca and Plato under the firs on the Areopagus. This was in 1937 and he stayed in Greece until the threat of war obliged him to leave. He had the good fortune to be posted to Samos in 1943 and to arrive in Athens with the first of the liberating troops. And now, for our good fortune, these islands and their very miscellaneous inhabitants have been delightfully depicted.

HENRY BAERLEIN.

**THOMAS ROWLANDSON: HIS LIFE AND HIS ART**, by Bernard Falk. *Hutchinson*. £3 3s.

The publication of Mr. Falk's life of Rowlandson prompts surprise that the many art books of the past thirty years, among them the good criticism of Sir Osbert Sitwell and Mr. Oppé, have not included an adequate life and representative collection of the artist's work.

Considered objectively, Rowlandson must appear the artist who would appeal to the widest English public on every level where there is any interest whatever in pictorial art. One of his pictures, in a mixed collection, always and at once attracts viewers by its pleasing colouring and its clarity. Once initial attention has been gained, the artist exerts his rare power of compelling interest in his subject. Always his work, satisfying in its broad outlines, encourages close and long inspection of its detail, for

Rowlandson gave a profusion of associative detail to his themes. Thus, this panorama of the water colour exhibition invariably lures those who see it into an attempt to identify each picture within the picture.

Historically, his picture may be satirical, but is accurate and informative to the point of being an important social document of his time. His satire can be vitriolic, but his humour is at its best in the broad, Chaucerian manner. Mr. Falk employs his generous allotment of illustrations to demonstrate almost every aspect of Rowlandson's technique but he achieves a surprising feat in the extent to which he avoids the bawdy. In this respect, he does not truly present the balance in the artist's work. Rowlandson's humour can become Rabelaisian, but it was completely divorced, in both aim and manner, from the morbid pornography which was a far-reaching fashion

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in his time and of which Fuseli was probably the finest practitioner. Above all, Rowlandson is unique ; the brilliant line of his quill pen is unmistakable ; imitated to an amazing degree, he yet has no comparable imitator.

Much of the actual and potential popularity of Rowlandson's work lies in its slightness of loss in reproduction—while his drawings are as perfect, as they were designed to be, in line reproduction, and his pen-and-water-colours are endlessly diverting when reproduced in colour and happier than most of their kind in black-and-white. In fact Rowlandson's work may be said to suffer less in reproduction than that of any other English artist of comparable importance. Again, such was the extent of his output that original works by him, while not common, are within the reach of any collector's purse, at prices much below those of some other artists of less magnitude.

Mr. Falk has performed a considerable service in making available, within a single book, so many technically good reproductions of the artist's work. Hitherto, Grego's somewhat untidy *Rowlandson the Caricaturist* was the only reputable work of reference on the artist; now Mr. Falk's book supersedes it and becomes authoritative. The author's approach is that of the type of literary craftsman who, during the past twenty years, has done much to remove the inaccuracies and illusions perpetuated by friends, mourners and enemies of the subjects of biography. He has sifted, and widely rejected, the available material on Rowlandson, going to original sources and reasoning honestly and without bias. If his study lacks shape, it is because he is concerned to present, in strict and well-indexed order, all possibly relevant material rather than to reform or suppress facts to the end of maintaining a theory. Mr. Falk has written the history of Rowlandson. What remains still to be written is a book on Rowlandson by an enthusiast—the book will bring the artist into his own. But that enthusiast must go to

Mr. Falk for his data.

No book at three guineas is lightly to be bought ; but here, at that price, are a biographical study, a bibliography of Rowlandson's coloured plate books and ninety well made reproductions of his work which appear certain to remain authoritative.

JOHN ARLOTT.

### THE CASTLE OF CHILLON, by

André Mikkelson. *Putnam.* 18s.

### I SAW IN MY DREAM, by Frank

Sargeson. *John Lehmann.* 10s. 6d.

### THE RUNNING OF THE TIDE, by

Esther Forbes. *Chatto & Windus.* 12s. 6d.

In *The Castle Of Chillon* Mr. Mikkelson, a Russian of Scottish ancestry, has written his "frank autobiography of youthful dissipation," a fascinating and well-made book. There are more than 600 pages, racy, raffish, dramatic ; yet possessing the charm that comes of a light touch. But here also is material—a detailed description of the squandering in less than five years of an inherited fortune of £30,000 on a life lived wholly for pleasure—that provides a stout stick for anyone with a social conscience to beat the 'bad old days' of the 'twenties. The book should delight hedonists, if indeed there are any of them left.

And yet, in spite of Mr. Mikkelson's deliberate choice of a "Rake's Progress" between the years of seventeen and twenty-four, his engaging personality, which comes through his writing, commands both sympathy and respect. He has a keen mind, stoicism, complete honesty, with a crisp humour based upon sensibility and observation. "Was Art, as Maria thought, the prime necessity of mankind, or was it a sign of degeneracy ? Perhaps the emotions it evoked were unreal, sterile ? I said this to Maria ; she nearly fainted. . . . One evening we were listening on the wireless to a beautiful and weird violin concerto by Sibelius, when Lisl sneezed outside the door. I felt to my distress that her sneeze was more real to me than

all the music Sibelius had ever written, and that Frances saying "Wow!" for instance, went far deeper under my skin than all the ordeals of Jean Valjean or Mitya Karamazov. Sad perhaps, but there it was."

Montreux, Cannes, Corsica, Paris, London, Berlin; travel by air, by yacht, by magnificent cars, by luxury expresses; the best food, dazzling women—and yet, when all is over and there is only £42 left at the bank, Mr. Mikhelson can cheerfully sell up and tackle a hard new life of reality in the Cameroons. That he was caught as a schoolboy by the Russian Revolution, seeing his mother die of starvation beside him and every sort of horror, provides a clue to his subsequent behaviour and his character, to his neuroses and thirst for the satisfactions and safety of riches.

Unfortunately, I have missed Mr. Sargeson's earlier work, short stories which have won much admiration and praise. However, I must confess to finding most of his novel, *I Saw In My Dream*, dull and pretty heavy-going. The setting is New Zealand, at first in a small town and then in remote bush-country, and the story is about a lawyer's clerk who later works on a farm. The first part, while the hero is still a child, is perhaps the best; the subjective, percipient mood of childhood is well done, his fears of conscience, his relations with a girl. But the style of writing suggests a false simplicity, which is meant to impress but only confuses. Sometimes it is hard to remember who everybody is; the people are not sufficiently defined, or are too lightly touched upon. The long account of mustering sheep, or the depiction of New Zealand landscape, are insufficient to compensate for the muddle of the human interest.

Miss Esther Forbes's *The Running Of The Tide* is a long historical novel which tells of the rise of the great sailing fleet of the House of Inman, port of Salem, Massachusetts, up to their surrender to the coming of steam. It

has won the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Novel Award in America, and in architecture and sustained power of story-telling is a considerable feat. There are no tag ends, the author's pattern is carried out to the last word. We are told excitingly everything that happens, as the captains of the House amass great wealth, led by the grandmother and her four grandsons. Miss Forbes's historical detail is enormous—possibly we are told too much. A comparison with *Gone With The Wind* has been claimed; but this story is not written with the imagination that gave such life to Scarlett O'Hara and made the fun of the barbecue. The romantic pattern woven by the splendid clippers alternating with the human interest should make a grand film. As a novel there is almost too much matter under one roof, and the reader is perhaps asked to share too many emotions.

JOSEPH BRADDOCK.

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## BOOKS ON THE TABLE

In twelve months of memorable theatregoing two pictures are enshrined: Dame Edith Evans rising from a restaurant table and silently crossing the floor in *Daphne Laureola*, and the slithering, shortening rope on the hearth in *Let's Make An Opera* which told that the little chimney sweep tied to its other end was climbing higher in the flues ; the one needing no context to impress its intrinsic poetry of movement, and the other a poignant symbol of careless cruelty. James Bridie's play is honourably mentioned in **THE YEAR'S WORK IN THE THEATRE 1948-1949** (published for the British Council by *Longmans Green*. 3s. 6d.) but the Benjamin Britten-Eric Crozier *tour de force* probably came too late for inclusion. With "The Old Vic" in the care of Ivor Brown, "The West End Theatre" in W. A. Darlington's, Ninette de Valois on "The Sadler's Wells Ballet", design discussed by James Laver, repertory by Alan Dent, and other equally important aspects and exponents of the theatre, those who love it will find this survey and the numerous illustrations an admirable insurance "against oblivion" in the shape of lost programmes or failure to keep a diary.

**East and puritan West**

Though the subtitle of *HALI* by G. V. Desani (Saturn Press. 7s. 6d.) is "A Play", the reader will echo Mr. T. S. Eliot's ruling in the Foreword : "It is, of course, as poetry that I take *Hali*." The voices of his god Raha, his mother Mira, of Rooh, Bhava, Maya and the magician tell the story of Hali's vision of good and evil. If, as Mr. E. M. Forster claims, the play "succeeds in being emotionally intelligible" it achieves this in the Western mind without Western theatrical device.— Still thinking in terms of drama, one who can still read *Samson Agonistes* at a sitting for its tragedy uncorrupted "to gratifie the people," as its author

says, turns with pleasure to Rex Warner's *JOHN MILTON* (*Max Parrish*. 6s.). Though some of the poet's work is "emotionally intelligible" to the point even of unbearable, the man himself, forbidding and omniscient, does not attract. Mr. Warner is an enthusiast and here presents facets of the life, the poems and the prose so successfully, as to cause this reader to regret that only the amorous parts of the *Paradieses Lost and Regained* were studied at the proper season with the proper zeal. But the rewards still wait—so back to the source, archaic spelling, showers of capital letters and italics, interminable length and all !

**The moving finger**

Other biblical happenings are presented so charmingly in the language of Helen Waddell in **STORIES FROM HOLY WRIT** (*Constable*. 8s. 6d.) that she almost makes untenable the theory she herself held that there should be no "tampering with the austerity of the Authorized Version." Originally written for children, these precise and delicately coloured portraits should be an agreeable surprise too for the newly grown up generation that is popularly supposed to have little knowledge of, and therefore no interest in, the great figures of the old Testament and the New.—It is safe to say that the Edwardian generation of readers grew up able to recite a few at least of the quatrains of Omar Khayyám's *Rubáiyát*. Some quoted for its philosophy's sake, others for the hypnotising beauty of the lines, but all were inclined to forget the translation-interpretation of Edward FitzGerald. He, in turn, has found a biographer-interpreter in Peter de Polnay, who lived for two years in FitzGerald's home in Suffolk and allowed himself and the house to become haunted by that fastidious and solitary spirit. The result, **INTO AN OLD ROOM** (*Martin Secker & Warburg*, 12s. 6d.), is well illustrated and documented and

a most attractive study of scholar, poet and devoted friend.

### Varied verse

It is not surprising that AN ANTHOLOGY OF VICTORIAN VERSE, chosen by Marjorie R. Evans (*Methuen*, 8s. 6d.), should contain a large portion of the *Rubáiyát*. In fact, this being no 'bitty' collection, one of its greatest pleasures is the size of each poet's share. Thus, for example, Matthew Arnold has 12, Emily Brontë seven, and Browning no less than 16 pieces, while at the other end of the book Tennyson is rightly allotted 17. But not only the begetters of "collected works" are here. There are poems from the lesser and the little known to make the whole truly representative of the era and to justify the contention in B. Ifor Evans's introduction that its "accomplishment in verse" was much more varied "than has often been allowed." — "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" inevitably calls up anecdotes of the antics of elocutionists in the nineteenth century, but its author, Robert Service, gives evidence in his new book of verse, SONGS OF A SUN-LOVER (*Ernest Benn*. 7s. 6d.), of belonging vigorously to this twentieth. He calls himself a "Laureate of the Lowly" and does indeed "trace the commonplace with humour and compassion." And what lover of books would fail to forgive the lapse and echo the *cri de cœur* of "Book-Borrower"? Here is a verse:

But worst of all I hate those crooks  
(May hell-fires burn them !)  
Who beg the loan of cherished books  
And don't return them.

### Learning the craft

This was the fate of Elizabeth Bowen's ENCOUNTERS (*Sidgwick & Jackson*. 7s. 6d.) which was originally published in 1923. It is good to have again such remembered stories as "Daffodils" and "Requiescat", the second coming quite vividly to mind last year on holiday as the boat neared Isola Bella on Lake Maggiore. The

author's Preface recalls the "newness of the sensation of writing" and her fear that she would be accused of imitating Katherine Mansfield. When she says: "I still cannot consider them badly written" she is not boasting. Those who know her novels will see the promise of their fulfilment clearly mirrored in these sketches. — Just so did L. A. G. Strong see his future interests and ambitions mirrored in the "verse and prose and talk about writers" he heard from his English teacher at a Plymouth school when he was ten years old. Lucky are those who are early warmed by such a fire and luckier still perhaps are the spreaders of the glow. Such a one was MAUD CHERRILL (*Max Parrish*, 6s.) and Mr. Strong pays some of his debt to her in this autobiographical biography which takes her pilgrimage through his life and work up to the day of her death in 1947. She was a born teacher, which means she loved and understood both her job and her pupils and, under God, could do no other.

### Conquering Pain

This sense of vocation, even in the days of a national health service, is surely still the chief requisite for nursing. Hilary St. George Saunders shows in THE MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL (*Max Parrish*. 8s. 6d.) how indispensable a possession it was in the grim days of the second half of the eighteenth century when the work "for the sick and lame of Soho" began with fifteen beds and three more for accidents. With many illustrations the author, who perfected his gifts for this particular kind of dramatic 'write-up' with his war documentaries, brings the story of this great hospital up to date, to 'blue babies', the electron microscope, streptomycin, dietetic kitchen, engineering department, and the "something more than efficiency" which is its pledge. The recorded testimony of "one who discovered for the first time the meaning of the phrase 'rushed to hospital'" could be currently corroborated by a long-term patient in the Howard de Walden ward who has ex-

pressed to this visitor now writing, her appreciation of the care, kindness and facilities for research with which she is surrounded.

### Victory indeed

Too much care, during the rehabilitation process at least, seems to be Harold Russell's only complaint against the Walter Reed General Hospital in *VICTORY IN MY HANDS* (John Lehmann, 10s. 6d.). Everyone who saw the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film *The Best Years of our Lives* will be unable to forget the sailor, Homer Parrish, who came back to civilian life minus his hands. Among a crowd of professional and established players, giving some of the best performances of their lives, Harold Russell very nearly ran away, as they say, with the picture. His part was almost his own life story, although he had actually been a paratrooper in the army. The problems—of asking a girl to marry him and his hooks, of learning to bear equally with misguided sympathy and impertinent curiosity, of coping with the tremendous 'if only's' that nagged in the night hours—were identical. His was as much a psychological as a physical dilemma, and how he overcame it he tells, with the help of Victor Rosen, in a book that should be read not only for the encouragement and inspiration of the crippled or handicapped but for the chastening of all the others who indulge in self pity, hypochondria or faintheartedness. His companions too in the amputee ward could put the rest of the world to shame :

They were always kidding around, playing jokes on each other and especially the strangers. There was a sleek-looking lad next to me who was a thinner edition of Don Ameche. One day he asked the Grey Lady to fetch him a pair of slippers. She brought them. Now would she mind putting them on for him? She drew back the covers and he roared. He'd lost his legs at Anzio.

Some readers might be jarred by the style at the beginning—peculiarly American, short sentenced and shorter paragraphed, dramatic emphasis alternating with mock nonchalance, all *staccato* and *sforzando* as if to cheat any suspicions of inhibition or reserve. But this soon merges into a swing and pace that sweeps the story and its reader along to the triumphant conclusion : "It is not what you have lost but what you have left that counts."

### The artist-craftsman

Which brings us to the superlative pair of hands that could weave a curtain on a loom, or dye it, handle a printing press, paint a portrait, make a chair, write a poem, or design and work a carpet, all with the ease of absolute mastery. To place on record here the delight in re-reading *THE LIFE OF WILLIAM MORRIS* by J. W. Mackail (Geoffrey Cumberlege : Oxford University Press. *World's Classics double volume 7s.*) is a fitting postscript for the Ruskin piece, published in the February number of *THE FORTNIGHTLY*, in which this reprint was anticipated. As a scholarly approach and for its wonderful prose, this is one of the best of all biographies. Mackail has been accused of suppressing many facts along with letters in his care which would throw light on some of the private relationships. But neither does the new Introduction of Sir Sydney Cockerell, recording his many personal and always happy memories of Morris, supply any key to the enigma of the man behind the master. Nevertheless, it makes engrossing reading. Longmans Green promise the first collection of Morris letters for June which are going "to throw a clearer light on the problem of his married life." The pride of the world in Morris, as in Ruskin, will not be the less, come what may of revelations good or bad.

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on the name of the LORD shall  
be delivered.” (Joel ii. 32)

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# Mould

Penicillin, exclusively British in its discovery and development, is recognised throughout the world as one of the greatest scientific achievements of all time. Its discovery in 1929 and its name were due to Professor (now Sir) Alexander Fleming of St. Mary's Hospital, London. The isolation of penicillin and its development as a practical weapon in the fight against disease was due to a team of research workers in Oxford led by Dr. (now Sir) Howard Florey and Dr. E. Chain. Penicillin, product of a simple mould, possesses astonishing bacteria-killing properties. Carried by the blood to all parts of the body, it attacks bacteria wherever they are established. Unlike so many other drugs, penicillin is not poisonous. Hence, it can be used by doctors and surgeons without any fear of an overdose proving harmful to the patient.

Early research on penicillin was attended by great difficulties. At first it was only possible to produce minute quantities from the mould (*Penicillium notatum*) and the substance was easily destroyed by heat, acids, enzymes and air-borne bacteria. Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. was the first industrial concern in Britain to make substantial quantities for chemical and biological investigation. The crude, unstable material then produced has since been superseded by an almost pure substance. Penicillin of I.C.I.'s manufacture is now a white crystalline product of known composition, which retains its activity for three years in all climates.

